THE New Republic

Martha Gellhorn
On Kind Hearts
Versus Coronets

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FALL LITERARY NUMBER

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OCTOBER 31, 1955

OCT 27 1955
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Washington Wire .... T.R.B.

We should say the Democrats have a 50-50 chance of winning next year's election. Of course, the GOP has the "peace and prosperity" slogan, and they have Ike, for he will make TV addresses whether or not he runs. They will also have enormous funds (probably two dollars for each one of the Democrats) and the press. These are major assets and might be decisive.

But the Democrats have certain assets of their own. It is our guess that the South is going Democratic next year if Ike doesn't run, and we should put in most of the border states, too. That is a chunk of about 140 to 150 votes out of the 531 in the electoral college. Again, Democrats now have the governorship (which means a potent local organization) in nine states which they lacked in 1952: New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, Minnesota, Arizona, Maine, Colorado, New Mexico. They have lost only Illinois. Democrats control most of the big cities. And the Democratic tide has been rising: for example, Ike was the first President in history to lose his majority in Congress in the first half of his first term. Even though he campaigned actively in 1954 he wasn't able to transfer his luster to fellow Republicans, a significant circumstance for next year.

As to issues, the GOP "peace and prosperity" appeal is strong and, perhaps, unbeatable. But Americans often vote their discontents, not their satisfactions. They have a willful way of not voting at all unless they are hopping mad. Today farmers are good and mad. Also there is another grievance less generally understood, the power issue. Irritation runs deep in the areas affected—the TVA states, the Pacific Northwest, the farm counties covered by REA and now the flooded regions of the East, New England, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Republicans have fought integrated flood-power-reclamation programs for years. Now the Democrats have put a House subcommittee on the road under Rep. Robert E. Jones (D, Ala.) to work over just those spots where the Hoover Commission attacked public power. It will draw a Democratic contrast to the GOP position. Democrats are vastly aided by Republican blasts, from Ike's "creeping socialism" charge against TVA to the latest financial warwhoop of top Hoover Commission consultant Admiral Ben Moreel (ret.), that *all* public power is a "fraud," "economically and morally wrong" and a "cancer." You can't help making votes with support like that.

Republicans are worried. At this preconvention stage it seems that their choice of a candidate may be crucial. Whereas the three leading Democratic candidates do not differ very greatly in outlook, the Republicans are widely split. Where will they go? Well, certain guide lines and guesses are possible.

For the moment Ike's illness has stunned the GOP; it is unable to admit that he probably won't run. We guess the GOP will come out of shock in a couple of months. Then will come Stage Two, also a little unreal: search for a Hero to compare with the larger-than-life image of Eisenhower. This should be the stage of the Warrens, Paul Hoffmans, General Gruenthers and Milton Eisenhowers. Our guess is that these men will either prove unavailable (like Warren) or pipe dreams. Stage Three will start round the first of the year when the party buckles down to finding a candidate on a down-to-earth basis.

Right here comes the ancient battle between the Old Guard (Knowland-Bricker-Dirksen) and the Eisenhower wing (Dewey - Nixon - Stassen, etc.). The Old Guard hasn't nominated its man since Landon in 1936; maybe we are wrong, but if Taft couldn't win in '52, we can't see Knowland and the conservatives winning next year.

All right, so what? From here on the crystal ball clouds up. For the Eisenhower boys, Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey would be the logical heir, but that would mean a direct battle over real issues which the GOP generally avoids. . . . Could it be Dewey? Perhaps; but we can never forget the venomous hatred of Old Guard Dirksen's attack on him on the floor of the '52 Chicago convention . . . Nixon? As of today most of our colleagues think he's in. Maybe. But we still guess Ike won't hazard his own prestige and reputation in the middle of the intra-party row by giving Nixon the nod direct; and we still think Nixon defeated himself by his "red taint" campaign against the Democrats last year. His party is grateful for that campaign—but won't it ultimately decide that Nixon alienated too many independents to give him the nomination now?

At least one Democratic leader of our acquaintance thinks it will be Stassen, or a Stassen-type man. As he puts it, "Stassen's marked-down merchandise right now, he seems a pigmy beside the blown-up image of Ike. But soon they won't be comparing him with Ike. Stassen works hard, is built like an ox, and to many people still has a faint aura of liberalism: he nominated Willkie, attacked McCarthy, and has grabbed the 'peace' issue round the neck (about which he has been making some rather silly speeches). Yes," says our friend "and he's just as adroit or—if you want to call it that—'flexible' as Nixon, but without making it either look or smell tricky."

Notes: Stevenson probably will enter five test primaries including California but not New Hampshire; Adlai's friends are frantically hunting for a good press officer. . . . Next month's "White House Conference on Education" was the Oveta Culp Hobby device for postponing action one year on the desperate school situation; now the Administration is trying to rig the convention to block floor discussions by the 2,000 delegates, leaving the reports to its hand-picked leaders. . . . Tax cuts next year seem inevitable and will be inflationary; they will be nice, but may bid up rising prices still further. . . . Washington has repeatedly urged New England to prepare a comprehensive water power-flood control program, but utility lobbies operating through Yankee conservatism have always stymied the project. Now Congress won't act unless New England changes its self-righteous mood; incidentally, the cost of such a program would be far less than the amount lost in recent floods.

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BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Primary Elections and Presidential Hopefuls

DEADLINE for filing in the 1956 Presidential preference primaries is already forcing decisions from party leaders and Presidential hopefuls, but the decisions being made by Republicans and Democrats are taking them in opposite directions.

Republican leaders are now drifting toward a pattern of favorite son candidates who can be used as stalking horses in the 18 states that hold Presidential primaries in 1956. Ohio Republicans have already selected Sen. John Bricker for this role. Indianans are organizing for House Minority Leader Charles Halleck. California Gov. Goodwin Knight has declared himself the California favorite son if the President does not run. None of these men will run in more than one state, a system which has the merit of avoiding a clash between candidates before the Convention. It would be possible for the Republicans to complete a slate of favorite sons, while showing no disrespect for the convalescing President, yet keeping the votes in the hands of delegates who could pool them if the President remained a candidate.

Democrats, on the other hand, will use the primaries as a pre-convention warmup in a fashion which could prove spectacular. Two leading contenders, Adlai Stevenson and Estes Kefauver, are each expected to enter and win several early primaries, building up to a final bout very late in the campaign in California.

In about 100 days (Feb. 12) the deadline will be reached for the filing of the names of Presidential candidates in the New Hampshire primary. The deadline for the filing of Ohio convention delegates comes a few days earlier (Feb. 8). The Ohio primary law requires that each convention delegate declare in advance his first and second choice for President and obtain in writing the consent of his Presidential candidate.

Conceivably these deadlines could impel a public announcement by the President of his own intentions, just as they did in 1952 when General Eisenhower, then at Supreme Headquarters in Paris, was led by supporters in the New Hampshire primary to declare (a) that he is a Republican, and (b) that he would accept "a clear-cut call of political duty." Now it is speculated by some political writers that the same primary in 1956 would lead the President to withdraw as a candidate, and make possible a wide open race.

But following a favorite-son strategy makes more sense for the Republicans. Up to the gathering of the Republican convention next August (and in fact until January 20, 1957) Vice President Richard Nixon could at any moment become President by an act of God. If this should occur before the convention, he becomes the expedient Republican nominee for re-election, and any prior campaigning against him by other Republican candidates could prove not only a disservice to the party but even to the nation. Regardless of the President's announcement of his own intentions, the position of Nixon as a constitutional successor argues strongly against Republican rivalries in the 1956 primaries. The toning down of California Governor Knight's hostile references to Nixon during the past fortnight supports this interpretation.

For the Democrats the outlook is very different. The likelihood of a Stevenson-Kefauver trial match in the primaries, with Averell Harriman looking on as a bystander, must be judged against recent political history which suggests that 1956 may be the most important Presidential primary since that of 1916.

First, there will be more states voting in primaries than ever before—18 states and two territories in 1956 compared to 16 states in 1952. The primary has come to symbolize the choice of the people as against the deals among party leaders. The time is probably past when a declared candidate can stay out of all primaries, as Governor Alf Landon did in the 1936 campaign.

Second, while only about half of the delegates to the Republican and Democratic conventions come from states which hold primaries, and only a quarter of the total delegates are committed by the primaries to support a given candidate, primary results have often proved decisive to the chances of candidates, and have direct influence upon the public-opinion polls.

For example, the 1948 primary fight of Thomas E. Dewey against Harold Stassen in Oregon gave Dewey a decisive victory which proved the beginning of the end for Stassen. In 1952 Eisenhower's impressive victory over the late Sen. Robert A. Taft and Harold Stassen in the New Hampshire primary put the Eisenhower bandwagon on the road.

The effect of the primaries upon the public-opinion polls was best demonstrated in 1948. Harold Stassen won a decisive margin in the Nebraska primary that year over Dewey and Taft, and Stassen's standing in public-opinion polls immediately shot up, and continued to climb for six weeks. But when Dewey later that year bested Stassen in the Oregon primary, after a much-publicized debate, Stassen's standing in the polls slumped, and continued downward to the convention.

The impact of these past events upon Stevenson and Kefauver is modified by their personal experiences. In 1952 Ke-

Next Week

The New Republic will assess the qualifications of Adlai E. Stevenson for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency.

In the same issue: 8 pages of Mr. Stevenson's recent statements on The American Economy, Our Foreign Policy, Health, Education, The Farm Problem, and Tolerance in Politics.

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fauver considered the primary his non-secret weapon, and entered the Democratic convention with by far the largest number of pledged delegates, yet Stevenson, who entered no primary, walked off with the prize. Kefauver advisers believe this means that their candidate should be selective, and enter only those contests where he is surest to win, and only in states where a victory means a pledge of votes. (Only 10 of the 18 primaries can result in pledged votes in 1956; the rest only indicate preference.)

Present informed calculations in the Kefauver camp are that the Tennessee Senator will almost surely enter the New Hampshire race (March 13), Wisconsin (April 3) and California (June 5), all three of which are binding on delegates.

Stevenson advisers are urging their candidate to stay out of the first two Kefauver races, but to sandwich in other contests which would offset Kefauver's publicity in winning them. Thus Stevenson would enter the Minnesota primary on March 20, a week after Kefauver's expected victory in New Hampshire; and Oregon (May 18). Both states are chosen because of strong local Democratic organizations which would bear the brunt of the Stevenson campaign.

But the inevitable pre-convention showdown will come, if not sooner, in the California balloting on June 5. Both Stevenson and Kefauver supporters are already organizing rival slates of convention delegates in that state. Success will bind all 60 delegates to the primary winner, the largest single bloc of votes decided in a primary. And the California results will be spread across the newspapers just sixty days before the Democratic convention.

In a California showdown Stevenson will be backed by almost the entire California Democratic delegation in Congress, by the state Democratic organization, and by ample funds. The Kefauver slate of delegates, as in 1952, will be made up of political amateurs, the most prominent of whom is a local automobile dealer.

Stevenson and most of his advisers had hoped to avoid such a pre-convention showdown, but have reluctantly come to the conclusion that to sidestep the clash would imply a fear of a Kefauver victory.

The Republican strategy of favorite sons, if that is finally adopted, leaves no place in the primaries for Eisenhower subordinates like Harold Stassen and Henry Cabot Lodge who no longer hold the leadership of their party in the states of their origin. Stassen is already busy campaigning, however, on a platform of peaceful atoms and disarmament, which justifies speeches in all parts of the country.

The Republican strategy also leaves unsolved in several states the question of whom, in fact, *is* the favorite son. In Wisconsin, backers of Sen. Joseph McCarthy have said they expect him to file as a favorite son candidate before the deadline of March 2.

In sum, the favorite son approach of the Republicans is likely to produce no fratricidal war, no surprises, and no changes in the situation before the convention. For the Democrats the preliminary bouts promise a series of crises, the virtual elimination of one or more candidates, and an unpredictable balance of power next August.

Where It Hurts

THE farm-price squeeze is becoming a political issue with a built-in squeal, as these developments testify:

1. Live hog prices dropped to 14¢ a pound in Chicago, lowest price since OPA days in World War II. As recently as 1954 hogs were selling for 25¢. The last time several million farmers in the corn belt got 14¢ for hogs, the nation still enjoyed a 5¢ telephone call, and the farmer was paying about $30 for a ton of corn fertilizer (now at least $40). That is what parity means in the Midwest.

2. Cotton farmers in the South, after having their acreage cut by Secretary of Agriculture Benson to the 1909 level, turned out 2 percent more cotton than in 1954. They simply poured on more fertilizer. Now Mr. Benson is required by law to make another cut in acreage in an election year ahead. No other action could make the cotton farmer more angry.

3. Nationally, farmer's net income dropped another 5½ percent in the third quarter of 1955, ending September 30, the President's Council of Economic Advisers reported. During the same quarter industrial profits and wages from urban employment set all-time records.

Democratic candidates for President have been running hard to catch up with the disastrous farm developments. Adlai Stevenson followed up his non-committal speech at Green Bay, Wisconsin, (*NR*, Oct. 24) by sending a surprise telegram to a Democratic farm rally at Des Moines on October 22, unequivocally backing 90-percent-parity payments for farmers, suggesting production payments to farmers for certain perishables, endorsing incentive pay-

THE New Republic A JOURNAL OF OPINION

1826 JEFFERSON PLACE, N. W. WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

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Published weekly and Copyrighted, 1955 in the USA by New Republic, Inc. Phone: REpublic 7-8656. Entered as second-class matter September 26, 1950, at the post office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Single copy, 20c; Yearly subscription, $7.00; Foreign, $8.00; Armed Forces personnel or students, $5.00.

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ments for the transfer of grain acreage into grass, and urging greater distribution abroad of United States surpluses.

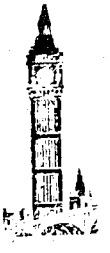
New York Governor Averell Harriman, chief speaker at the Des Moines rally, called the Stevenson proposals a constructive program, and went on in his own address to outline substantially the same emergency and long-range plans. The Stevenson and Harriman statements in Des Moines placed the two men on an even footing in public commitments to farmers.

An interesting clue on the source of Stevenson's latest proposals was served up by a United Press reporter who wrote from Des Moines that Herbert Waters, assistant to Sen. Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, offered to read the Stevenson telegram to the farm conference, then suggested it would be courteous to wait until the chairman of the meeting received the original.

Socialist Evangelism and Practical Politics

COMPARED with the 1951 election, the British Labour Party lost a million more votes last year than the Conservatives. This year's Labour Party Conference at Margate was, therefore, essentially an inquest into apathy.

A week previously delegates had received the report of a special committee on organization led by Harold Wilson, the adroit young intellectual who resigned with Bevan from the Labour Government in 1951. The Wilson report claimed that the Labour Party machine was still at the penny-farthing stage in a jet age, and attributed the loss of 35 marginal seats—enough to produce the Conservative majority—primarily to bad organization. The crucial weakness Wilson's report revealed was the shortage of those voluntary workers on whom the Labour Party organization must always depend. In part, this shortage is due to Britain's prosperity—many Labour supporters are working overtime until it is too late, or they are too tired, to do effective party work; their wives are working too, unless children monopolize their leisure. Also, Labour is the victim of its own achievements. The Welfare State has removed those glaring injustices which in the past drove ordinary men to sacrifice their leisure to the Labour Party. Nowadays the active party worker tends to be inspired by doctrinal convictions rather than a burning sense of personal grievance, one reason for the hold of Bevanism. The same factors are reflected in the Party's failure to recruit youth on anything like the scale of the Conservatives.



Yet Margate showed that though dogmatic Utopianism is still the mainspring of the local Labour parties, they are now aware of the difficulty of transplanting their faith into a program which can win electoral support. The general debate on future policy was a dispiriting affair—speaker after speaker demanded a bold new stride toward Socialism, yet the conference rejected almost unanimously a motion for large-scale nationalization and was content with a promise by the National Executive to produce a series of reports on policy over the next few years. This conflict between a vague residual Utopianism and the need to find concrete answers to the specific problems facing modern Britain is aggravated by Bevanism.

In a shattering speech which, though made in private session, was heard by all the press because the loudspeakers continued to boom through open windows, Aneurin Bevan claimed that Labour had lost the election because he personally had been humiliated by a call for his expulsion made by "people who are not Socialists at all." "You cannot build a great Socialist movement," he cried, "just on technical differences with the Tories." The speech brought him a wild ovation; two days later he himself made a brilliant defense of a resolution on the *technical* problem of financing social security.

The fact is that there is no important disagreement on policy between the Bevanites and their opponents. But so long as Bevan and the journalists who support him use the force of their eloquence to denounce any rival attempt to solve Britain's problems as a betrayal of Socialism, the development of Labour Party policy will continue to be distorted by a quite irrelevant argument about who is or is not the true believer in Socialism.

Nonetheless, the Margate Conference showed a steady move toward realism, and the platform won majorities of three- or four-to-one on every issue. One consequence of the "Geneva spirit" is that foreign policy is no longer a decisive issue and the Communists no longer provide an effective national underground movement for organizing the Labour Left. Indeed the Trotskyites have become a more dangerous Trojan horse. The foreign policy proposed at Margate by the Communist-led Fire Brigades Union had already been taken over by Mr. Harold Macmillan and Herr Von Brentano!

Most observers at Margate felt that, though the Labour Party is now moving toward recovery, there will be no dramatic progress until the new leadership is settled. But the prospects here are cloudier than ever.

It looks as though Attlee, despite his published wish to retire, will stay until he is satisfied that the transition to his successor will be smooth. Bevan seems further from the leadership than ever. Hugh Gaitskell beat him for Treasurer by four to one, winning over not only two big unions which have previously supported Bevan but also nearly half of the constituency Labour Parties. Moreover Gaitskell has been rapidly overtaking Morrison. The latest Gallup Poll shows him neck and neck with Morrison as favorite among Labour voters, and at Margate, though Morrison was more vigorous than he has seemed for years, Gaitskell won an ovation louder even than Bevan's by making the speech of his life.

The Bevanites, having recently loaded Attlee with their affection, will probably transfer it to Morrison if Attlee looks like retiring, on the grounds that Bevan's chances of succeeding will be negligible once Gaitskell takes over. Meanwhile Gaitskell, at the risk of weakening his union support, has helped Bevan's former friends—Harold Wilson and Richard Crossman—into the limelight in the reasonable hope of detaching them from Bevan. Some observers now foresee a struggle for leadership between an aging Morrison-Bevan team and a youthful Gaitskell-Wilson team. This may be too extravagant a fantasy. Yet it cannot be said that Margate pointed clearly in any other direction.

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The Superficial Aspect

A Matter of Style

The superficial aspect of the Truman-Stevenson relation is perplexing. On the face of it, the Hon. Harry S. Truman has dished up the Hon. Adlai E. Stevenson as completely as within him lies; and as the Hon. Adlai is the leading contender for the Democratic nomination, it would seem that the Hon. Harry has dished up party harmony too.

But this is incredible. The consensus is that Ike is out, and that Nixon, even with his chipmunk cheeks and ingratiating smile, can't make the grade. Hence the Republican Party has to build up a candidate which inevitably entails some squabbling. The Democrats, starting with a candidate who could get 27 million votes against Eisenhower, and who, losing New York, could yet poll 125,000 more votes than Harriman could poll in winning it, have only to maintain reasonably close order to win in a walk—or so it would seem to an outsider.

The question is, why does Truman seize this moment to rock the boat?

The ready Republican answer is, of course, ambition. They say that Truman is trying to throw the convention into confusion so that he may seize the nomination himself. It could be, but it isn't likely. Never before did Truman throw down the party to serve his own ends, and few will believe that he is starting to do so now.

It all goes back to the event of September 24. Up to that time practically all politicians had assumed—probably wrongly, but implicitly—that the Democratic nomination wouldn't be worth a plugged nickel anyhow, so why not let Stevenson have it? Thus everybody except Kefauver was for Stevenson.

Then fate stepped in, and overnight the nomination became a great political prize. The industrious Mr. De Sapio, who put his man over in New York by 11,000, claimed precedence over Mr. Stevenson, who put his man over in Illinois by 237,000. And Truman crawfished.

Superficially, this looks like weird politics, but there are at least three explanations that will account for it without assuming either (a) that Truman has lost his grip, or (b) that his whole character has changed.

One is that Truman dislikes the role of Warwick, the King-Maker, because when you play the King-Maker you become more or less responsible for the king you make. A second is that while he might like to dictate the nomination, he knows that the typical response of a great many American voters to the ukase of a King-Maker is to say, "The hell with you!" and vote for the other man; so Truman's active support might be the kiss of death for Stevenson.

The third, and by far the most easily credible, explanation is that Truman is not and never was wholeheartedly for Stevenson, not out of jealousy and not on principle, but simply because of the two men's difference in style. This may seem to be trivial, but it isn't. A difference not in the content but in the manner of two men's thinking, acting and speaking, that is to say, in their styles, may create a deeper and wider rift between them than a difference on fundamental principles.

John Adams and Alexander Hamilton held the same political philosophy, but they hated each other more bitterly than either hated Jefferson, whose basic principles were antagonistic to theirs. Adams and Jefferson, indeed, loved each other in spite of their quarrels because, far as they diverged on principle, the style of each was that of a cultivated English gentleman, while Hamilton's was that of a parvenu.

The true greatness of William J. Bryan was his ability to overlook a style that he disliked and distrusted and see in Woodrow Wilson an effective protagonist of principles that both men held. Bryan's capacity to subordinate his prejudices to his principles spelled success for the Democratic Party in 1912; while the inability of either McAdoo or Smith to do so brought its ruin in 1924.

There is no appreciable difference in the political philosophy of Harry S. Truman and Adlai E. Stevenson, but one fights fist-and-skull, the other with a rapier—or, to put it in modern terms, one is a captain of artillery, the other of commandos. Although they fight in the same army, it is too much to expect that either will altogether approve the other's tactics.

It is impossible, and if it were possible it would be lamentable, for either man to change his nature; but it is possible for Stevenson to be a little more direct and Truman a little more suave. Above all, it is possible for each to remember that a rift between them would be a heaven-sent opportunity for every Iago in the Democratic Party—and there are many. Without doubt there is a very subtle game of drop-the-handkerchief going on at this moment, and Desdemona-Democracy stands a fine chance of being strangled before it ends.

GERALD W. JOHNSON

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Kind Hearts *vs.* Coronets

by Martha Gellhorn

As a resident outsider, in England, I feel that any foreigner who tries to be sure about the English, their emotions, their reasons for their emotions, or even their reasons for being reasonable, is taking nasty chances. I have always thought that in a race between the Chinese and the English, the English would win hands down; for the Chinese not only are mysterious but frankly look mysterious, whereas the English, after all, look just like you and me. There's no time when it is wiser to be unsure about the English than when the English are having a family problem. The question of Princess Margaret's marriage to Group Captain Peter Townsend, to be or not to be, is the problem of a giant family, composed of every loyal subject of the Crown. Unlike what to do about Cyprus or the hydrogen bomb, everyone has ideas on an unconventional match in the family; and a jolly good chat is being had by all.

Those who think of Princess Margaret as a pretty young woman of 25, human like anyone else, see this possible marriage in personal terms. Let the poor girl do what she wants is the general tone. Love comes first. Awfully hard on her sister, such a sad difficult position for the Queen; must be terribly worrying for her mother, Townsend being so much older and divorced and with two children, not what one would hope for one's daughter, though he's a perfectly nice young man, fine war record and all that, very worrying, still the girl has a right to be happy and who can dictate to the heart.

Those who think of Princess Margaret as Royalty first and foremost, third in succession to the Crown, sister of the Head of the Established Church, have quite a different view; they regard marriage with a divorced commoner as a terrible letting down of the side, a refusal to play the game according to the rules which govern her team. Her position requires by law an equally exalted mate; her position requires absolute obedience to the tenets of the Established Church, whose temporal head is the Monarch. By putting her own wish above the team rules, Princess Margaret cheapens herself, therefore the Royal Family, and by flouting her church she declares that the Church is not a discipline but a convenience. The people who see this marriage as a grave State concern take it very seriously indeed and believe such a union would be a damaging blow to those joined, ancient, essential institutions—the Crown and the Church.

Aside from these two major divisions of thought—she's human, let her live; she's a Royal Highness, let her do her duty—there is a lot of extra agitation. The *Daily Mirror,* which speaks loudly for or to millions of Labourite working people, takes a democratic view, why shouldn't royalty get right down into daily real life with the rest of us, especially if it upsets the reactionary Church of England. (The undergraduates at Balliol ban the *Daily Mirror* from their Common Room in disgust at vulgar prying into the private life of the Princess. The *Daily Mirror* replies with an insulting editorial about the young squirts at Oxford.) The Press Council censures "certain papers," without naming names, for lowering the reputation of the press by their reporting of Princess Margaret's affairs. The Church and its rigid attitude toward the re-marriage of divorced persons are blamed and pushed about, in letters to the editor; or energetically

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sustained in other letters to the editor. People observe that it would not be a good vote-getting idea for a Conservative Prime Minister to weigh in against this marriage, dangerously undemocratic, have to keep in step with the age of the common man after all, but what *is* the Cabinet going to do? Pubs and drawing rooms buzz with talk, and small crowds collect wherever the Princess goes, and (except during heavy rain) outside Buckingham Palace and Clarence House where Princess Margaret lives, and the house in Lowndes Square where Group Captain Townsend stays. One cannot tell whether the English are deeply disturbed by this love story, or rather enjoying all the excitement. Perhaps they do not yet know themselves what they hope will happen.

Here are samples of opinion, fairly typical, I think. In the immortal language of statistical reports we begin:

Working class, female, age 40, profession: charlady. "I'm all for Margaret being happy and having her choice; but not in regards of paying. She'll always be Princess Margaret, she was born a Princess, but then her husband ought to look after her, and her family, not the state. She won't be doing nothing for the state, so why should we pay for her? The people are all for her, but not that much for her. . . . Now look, there was nobody the people liked more than whatchumcallit, can't think of his name now—oh yes, the Duke of Windsor—and he made his choice and it didn't do no harm to the Royal Family, nor to him neither, the people like him just as much. He made his choice, that fella, and paid his price for it and cleared out. . . . Love's the thing, ain't it; riches without love, you might as well be dead, I always say."

Middle Class: male and female, age 30-45, profession: various. "We put the Royal Family on a pinnacle and expect them to stay there. It isn't right for Royalty to be as squalid as the rest of us, getting mixed up with divorce and things." . . . "Princess Margaret is the religious one in the Royal Family, we've always been told that. Then how can she even think of doing this, against the Church?" . . . "She ought to have to consider her family, like other people do. Above all, when her sister is the Queen; what a dreadful position it's putting the Queen into." . . . "Of course the Royal Marriages Act can be repealed, and Royalty can marry dustmen if they like, and then where are we?" . . . "The less people believe in God, the more they must have the Royal Family to believe in. But this is really the limit, it takes a good whack at both."

Upper class: male and female, ages 35-60, no profession. "I can't think what all the fuss is about. We've known this was going on for two years and now suddenly this gigantic hoo-hoo. Though, can you imagine wanting to give up all that lovely Royal thing, and the eighth largest Rolls Royce in the world, just to be Mrs. T.? Still really, what business is it of ours?" . . . "People are saying now that the Group Captain shouldn't have divorced his wife, not a bit gentlemanly. Can you beat it? But if *he'd* been divorced, where would he be, everyone shouting about sinners, no doubt." . . . "I think it's the worst bore by now that ever was; won't it be lovely when it's all over and we can talk of something else."

In fact, if Princess Margaret and Group Captain Townsend decide to marry they can do so, after Parliament takes the necessary steps, and the Church will withhold its blessing but accept facts. It is my guess that the people of this country would wish the young couple luck and happiness and, in a mild unrevengeful way, they would gradually lose interest in Princess Margaret as they have lost interest in the Duke of Windsor. True, in a country which cares so very much for duty, it is awkward to have the supreme example-setters prefer personal happiness to duty, but there remains always the Queen, unassailable as a person and an institution, really a national ikon too, and the Throne has weathered a lot worse than this, and so has the Church. It seems oddly alarmist for the determinedly unalarmist English to worry about the weakening of the Crown and the Church, as if time and life did not weaken everything, but see how powerfully these two ancient establishments survive.

On the other hand, there is a chance that Princess Margaret and Group Captain Townsend will decide not to marry after all. Then my guess is that there will be a general feeling of relief and a great popular wave of sympathy for the two young people, renouncing happiness in favor of duty. The Church will appear a miserable old ogre, and the Royal Family a stern taskmaster to its young Princess, and in due course all that will be forgotten too.

MR. GEOFFREY GORER, the anthropologist, has questioned the beliefs and prejudices and habits of mind of large numbers of the English middle and working classes and compiled their answers into a book called *Exploring English Character*. In a review of this book, Mr. Angus Wilson sums up its findings: "It is clear that the English people as a whole are deeply obsessed with restraining any element of violence. They rate gentleness very high as a virtue and they regard loss of temper as a major sin. They believe in discipline for themselves and their children." It is a convincing description. This people apparently enjoys, is comfortably at home in, order and law; they can afford to be lenient with a young Princess who threatens to sidestep her regal order and law. She won't cause their own standards to wobble, they are always sure to carry on, as before.

Meantime, it is interesting to note that, owing to the Motor Show, we are now getting nearly as many pictures of new cars as of Princess Margaret. The English have also an odd passion for normalcy.

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The White Folks Fight Back

by Julian Scheer

IN mid-September the town of Manning, South Carolina (pop. 2,775) celebrated its centennial. As a part of the 1855-1955 festivities, the townspeople were requested to dress in the costumes of the past.

Lady folks of the town did their Friday shopping bedecked in gingham dresses and sun bonnets and the men folks grew beards or were required to buy "shaving permits." Everyone joined in the spirit.

A Northern tourist, travelling south on busy US 15, stopped at White's Streamline Restaurant in August and was puzzled when he saw the amusing flashback to the old—the beards and string ties and cutaway coats. He approached a group of local citizens and asked about the strange garb.

"Every man in this county," said one man, recognizing the visitor's Yankee accent, "that's killed at least one nigger wears a beard."

The stranger from the North was properly shocked. The local man's contemporaries laughed nervously at their loose-tongued friend. But, in the main, they understood that he was merely telling the outside world in a crude sort of way that this was a local problem, that the South is in dead earnest, and that if desegregation is pressed, a day of violence may come.

This was Clarendon County, South Carolina—apprehensive, restless, excited. This county gave birth to the case entitled "Harry Briggs, *et al*, plaintiffs" versus "R. W. Elliott, *et al*, defendants" of Summerton School District 22 which brought about the Supreme Court's May 17, 1954, decision on school desegregation and a chain reaction of cases elsewhere.

Since that time Clarendon County has become a county where a best-seller could be Tom Brady's *Black Monday* or W. E. Debnam's *My Old Kentucky Home Goodnight*, where they talk of Citizens' Councils and the "economic squeeze," where the Ku Klux Klan met with Bryant Bowles, head of the National Association for the Advancement of White People, as a featured speaker, where integration is freely referred to as a "Communist-Catholic-Jewish plot," where a place of business displays the latest newspaper clippings showing crimes of Negro against white, where private citizens discuss the hated Ford Foundation along with the price of tobacco, where the NAACP has only a small chapter and where you hunt long and hard for a defender of the Negro.

This is the county where three federal judges told Summerton school officials in Columbia to move toward the elimination of racial bars to school administration but set no time limit on its accomplishment. In turn, the vast majority of responsible civic leaders and rabid hotheads agree on one hard fact: there'll never be integration in the schools.

The alternative: do without public schools.

★

Clarendon County is in the east central portion of the state of South Carolina. It is pie-shaped with the crust resting on the edge of the large Santee River basin and the tip pointing northward.

It is a place of tall trees, many of them draped with the picturesque Spanish moss of the Old South, and long, rolling countryside. It is mostly a flat country, but there is an uneasy movement of hills and dips that lends character and voice to the land. Most of the year it is a green county with the soil varying from the blackish mud of the swamps to the sandy tan of the cotton fields. It is a fisherman's country and a hunter's haven, for the Santee and the Pocotaligo are abundant with fish and fowl, and the forests are wealthy with deer.

The county is 20 to 30 miles in length north and south, slightly longer facing east and west. It is an agricultural county where tobacco and cotton are the main crops, but where timber also supplies a steady source of income. There are few industries here. A clothing mill is located in Manning and there are several lumber mills, and the cotton country has its inevitable gins. In the south the land is low and timber grows in the mushy earth and cotton on the low, dry land. In the north the county is rich with tobacco, and they say some of the South's finest flue-cured tobacco comes from Puddin' Swamp. Tobacco means money in Clarendon; cotton means a living. With the cotton you find the Negro; with tobacco the whites.

The population of the county is slightly more than 32,000, and 23,000 of the population is Negro. In the north the Negro is sparsely settled; in the south he outnumbers his white neighbors by nine to one.

When Harry Briggs and his friends affixed their names to a petition in 1949, the case involved what was then known as Summerton School District 22. Today the district has been consolidated and the entire county has been divided into just three districts. Summerton No. 22 is now Summerton No. 1. And, according to the defendants in the case, a million dollars has been poured into equalization, and the white and Negro schools are alike in facilities.

Julian Scheer is a reporter for the Charlotte News and Observer.

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Tobacco Means Money

In the county itself there are 2,247 white school children and 6,660 Negro school children. Of these, the Summerton District has but 298 white and 2,259 Negro students attending its schools.

★

He sat in the corner office of the courthouse in Manning on a warm September morning. It was a lazy Saturday. Outside on the green, visitors from the country sat on the lawn as a nearby gang of Negro prisoners in striped uniforms clipped the grass under the watchful eye of a rifle.

He wore a string tie with "1855" on one side, "1955" on the other. He was one of the most distinguished looking men in the costume of the centennial celebration, and his mustache and goatee were neatly trimmed.

His name, he said, was B. L. McCord, Superintendent of Education for Clarendon County. He has held the position 15 years now. Elective office. Only had opposition once, the first time, and it's a mighty nice feeling running without competition.

> Segregation? No nine men in this United States are going to dictate who our children are going to associate with, even if it comes to the place where we don't have public schools.
>
> We know it will do naught good to either race and harm to both, especially the Negro. No one on earth, [he said] has treated the Negro more kindly than we have. We want better relationships but we're not going to mix. Too great are the biological differences. And I believe in the Bible and the Bible tells you not to.
>
> Mixing leads to friction, and you know what friction leads to. We just ain't going to jump into the river!
>
> We're going to study and work out some plan. Court didn't say how long we had, but it didn't implement the decree either. Court says we can leave the running of schools to the trustees.
>
> Thurgood Marshall [NAACP counsel] objected. He said we had all the time we needed. Court said we [the court] don't want a report from you. But we told Brother Thurgood—that damn Yankee Negro—that the court was open to him and to press it if you want to. You'll just have, we told him, 2,500 without schools for we'll discontinue first.

He was referring to the July hearing in Columbia.

> We won't have mixed schools [he continued] because we have a Citizens' Council now. It was just formed 10 weeks ago [in August]. Our constitution is in favor of anything that will work toward that end—separate and equal facilities. All the men on the Council are honorable and lawful men.

★

McCord was the founder of the first Citizens' Council in Clarendon County, and now there are two, in Manning and Summerton. They are patterned after the Councils in Mississippi, and after a slow start 40 were organized in a sudden fury in South Carolina. The Council offers a new threat to the Negro—the "economic pressure."

In Clarendon they'll tell you that the "squeeze" is not an organized or authorized weapon, but reports indicate it has been used in some other sections of the state and isn't far off here.

McCord admits, however, that as far as his teachers are concerned, those without the "best interest of the races" at heart would have to face it. It would be simple. Just don't re-elect them for the next school term.

In South Carolina there have been 18 petitions filed by Negroes calling for the immediate implementation of the Supreme Court's decree. But since the Councils have been organized, only two petitions have been filed and neither of these came from the rural areas. Clarendon has had no new petitions since the original cases.

The "squeeze" is the big stick. To apply it to the Negro, don't gin his cotton, don't renew his bank note, fire him from his job. This is reprisal for anyone who wants to "stir up trouble" and sign a petition.

Economics frighten the Negro in Clarendon, as elsewhere in the state, for he is, for the most part, a dependent. A few Negroes own their farms, but most of them are engaged in day labor or sharecropping. Day labor in this part of the world is primarily cotton picking at $2 a hundred pounds. And if you're a good hand, you can pick nearly 300 pounds a day.

★

Over at Liberty Hill, two miles south of Summerton, Rev. E. E. Richburg is the secretary of the county chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. There is a strong pro-white group among the Negroes of Clarendon County, a larger group that is too ignorant or too indifferent to care. In between rests the NAACP.

The Reverend lives in a modest little home flanked by a corn field on one side and his large, modern church on the other. He is a well-dressed, mild-mannered, scholarly-looking man who was educated in Columbia and who worked in the North before coming back home. To him the "squeeze" is a haunting thing. It is the first real threat, for he says there have been no threats or acts of violence or reprisal.

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The Reverend's NAACP chapter is small—less than 500 members out of 23,000 Negroes in the county—and he is worried about the apathy within his own race. The "squeeze" could be the blow that kills off what remains of his people's participation in political affairs.

A boycott could be an answer. With an overwhelming Negro population, the Negro could select his merchants with care, dealing with those sympathetic, boycotting those who are not.

"It may not be Christian," he says, "but it may come."

★

The Ku Klux Klan has been born again in Clarendon—and most folks concede that it was pretty dead—but it does not appear to have widespread appeal to the masses. This is particularly true with the business and professional men who, like the farmers, have cast their lot with the Citizens' Council.

When the Klan tried to obtain a good meeting place in Summerton, the "black belt," in August, local leaders persuaded the Klansmen to go elsewhere. Manning was chosen for the rally site, and by Klan standards the rally was a success. Bryant Bowles came down from Delaware to speak and was on the stand with three robed leaders. Everyone else came unrobed and 3,000 attended, nearly one-third of the county's population.

But in the South today, and especially South Carolina, the Citizens' Councils offer a more unnerving effect than the KKK.

In July of 1954 the first Citizens' Council was formed in Indianola, Miss., by 14 men "who met and counselled together on the terrible crisis precipitated by the United States Supreme Court in its Black Monday decision of May 17, 1954," according to the Councils' annual report on August, 1955. The report states:

> Despite the long-range dangers to our constitutional safeguards apparent to many men, North, South, East and West, in legislation by judicial fiat, the immediate and pressing danger to men and women in Mississippi and the rest of the South was the potential flood of Negro invasion into our schools, parks, swimming pools, restaurants, hotels, trains, buses, into our very neighborhoods and homes and into public office.

So the Councils were born.

> These 14 men [the report continues] having no idea that such a small beginning would in a few months' time expand miraculously into a virile and potent organization, worked out the basic ideas underlying the Citizens' Councils method of operation.

In Mississippi today there are 253 Citizens' Councils with a total white membership of more than 60,000. Members call these Councils "a modern version of the old time town meeting to meet any crisis by expressing the will of the people."

From the Winona, Miss., headquarters of the CC, a pamphlet explaining the purposes of the Councils says:

> Maybe your community has no racial problems! This may be true; however, you may not have a fire, yet you maintain a fire department. You can depend on one thing: the NAACP, aided by alien influences, block-vote-seeking-politicians and left-wing do-gooders, will see that you have a problem in the near future.
>
> The Citizens' Council is the South's answer to the mongrelizers. We will not be *integrated!* We are proud of our white blood and our white heritage of 60 centuries. . . . If we are bigoted, prejudiced, un-American, etc., so were George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and our other illustrious forebears who believed in segregation."

Most of the prominent citizens of the state and county will say that "economic pressure" is not desired or in practice. However, when one Council member fires a Negro from his job for signing a petition, the other Council members will not re-hire him. It works. In many cases Negroes who have signed petitions have already disavowed their signatures or have publicly stated that their signatures were obtained by fraud or misrepresentations, beating the Councils to the punch.

If not the "squeeze," what are the purposes of the Councils?

One leader states: "We want to take the Southern story North, just as the NAACP has taken the Northern story South."

Another: "We had to organize. The NAACP is rich and has many members. You've got to fight fire with fire."

Still another: "We need legal advisory. We can find constitutional grounds to fight the threat."

A statement from the office of Sen. Olin D. Johnston: "He expressed his absolute agreement with the principles of the various Citizens' Councils that are being organized throughout the state."

Open opposition to the Citizens' Council has come from one religious source: the South Carolina Methodist Conference early deplored the organization of the Councils and some of their purposes, particularly the use of economic pressure. However, this opposition was not taken as a broad denunciation by that church and cer-

Cotton Means a Living

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tainly has not been the flavor of South Carolina religious opinion on the matter. In fact, many Councils number among their leaders pastors of churches in their communities.

★

"To understand the situation," said Samuel Emory Rogers, "you've got to understand Summerton."

Emory Rogers is the lawyer who, with Robert McC. Figg of Charleston, defended the Summerton School District in the original Supreme Court test.

He is a short, pudgy man with a round, full face. In some reflective moods, when he removes his glasses, you catch a John L. Lewis expression on his face. He is greying, rather quiet, soft-spoken, earnest.

Emory Rogers' office is in one of Summerton's three two-story business buildings. On a September afternoon it was a dirty, crowded, hot business district. The area takes on the air of a Western frontier town as depicted by Hollywood, the store fronts looking false as they face a narrow street which is also US 15. Above Cockrey's grocery store Emory Rogers has his office.

Nowhere on the street is the office marked, nowhere on his three second-story windows facing the street is his name inscribed. You walk up a narrow staircase of worn, wooden steps and the first positive identification comes on the first door on the right.

Emory Rogers' desk is a large one covered with briefs, papers and books. He is nearly lost behind it. From this desk a Supreme Court case was prepared. Rogers is a native of Summerton. He left the town to do undergraduate work at Washington and Lee University, did graduate work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He majored in psychology and sociology in addition to studying law.

Summerton, he says, is a strange little town. Off behind the business districts on either side of US 15, the residential districts are neat and well-to-do. The population of 1,500 within the town limits is almost all white, for the Negroes live across US 301 in their own "town." The white vote registration is about 400, the Negro 150. "No reason to ever increase the town limits," says one citizen. "If we did, we'd be outvoted."

A good portion of the town has the decadent air of plantation-style homes still occupied by the leading and wealthy citizens. Next door may be a similar home, tumbling down with rot and decay. Old Charleston families settled the town. The younger generation of some of the well-known Charleston names sought new plantation lands along the Santee River above Charleston where they could bring their slaves, raise a good crop and ship it by water down to the port city. But the summer months became unbearable for them. The swampy riverfront land bred mosquitoes, so they retreated to higher land and settled in large summer homes—those still standing today—in a colony which became known as Summerton.

Since its beginning the town has never been commercialized.

> These people [explains Emory Rogers] were brought up first in the master-slave tradition, then the master-servant tradition. It has come nowadays, to farmer-farm-laborer situation. They won't give that up.
>
> Integration? Not in the foreseeable future, even if it means elimination of the public schools.
>
> But these are level-headed, thinking people. They are not excited, but they're determined. We plan to have a survey done and will proceed after that.

The projected survey has not been started. And there appears to be no rush about it. The plan is still vague. The answer for Rogers and others is again the Citizens' Council. Nearly all leading citizens belong, including Rev. Henry Rankin of the Presbyterian Church. He, in fact, is chairman of the Councils' race-relations committee. "We have put about a million dollars in our schools to achieve equality of facilities," says Rogers. "Even the colored people will tell you they're equal."

Some will say things are better. Some will complain about the crowded conditions of the lower grades. Most will say little.

★

Just outside Summerton Harry Briggs lives. He is more famous than the Gibsons and Parsons and Olivers, although they, too, signed the original petition in Summerton. But Briggs headed the list because of the "b" in front of his name.

Many people have come to talk with him. Many people have talked with his wife, a more outspoken, determined person, and many have seen Harry Jr., the nine-year old youngster for whom he signed who is now a gangly 15-year-old with a paper route in Summerton—carrying an anti-integration daily.

Harry Briggs is a squat, well-built Negro. He works for himself, "farming my wife's piece of land," has a nice little home and a four-door 1950 vintage automobile. Many times Harry Briggs has climbed upon the front fender of the car and conducted "press conferences." He is adept at it now and parries questions with tact and diplomacy.

> No [he says] I don't guess I'm afraid. Nobody ever threatens me or anything. I just ain't got nothing to say. I done said what I have to say when I signed the paper.
>
> Sure, I think about the Mississippi case [Till] sometimes. You can't help but think of it when you got young'uns. There's people like Reverend Richburg at Liberty Hill that talks. It don't make no difference what I say. I just don't want to get in trouble. I mind my own business and don't stir up trouble.
>
> You're just here for a little while but I gotta live here.
>
> You like to fish? Now if you want to go fishing, I can show you where. That's all a man's got a mind to talk about now—fishing and things like that.

"Mister," adds Mrs. Briggs, "you oughta understand."

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FALL LITERARY REVIEW

The Monstrous Self-deception of Elmer Gantry

by Mark Schorer

THE publication of *Elmer Gantry* early in 1927 was not so much a literary event as it was a public scandal, and from the beginning, therefore, excitement took the place of criticism. Preceded by the well-publicized "Strike me dead" episode, it called forth remarks like this from William Allen White: "Sinclair Lewis stood in the pulpit of a Kansas City church last spring and defied God to strike him dead. So far as Sinclair Lewis, the artist, is concerned in the book, *Elmer Gantry*, God took him at his word." Municipal bans extended from Kansas City to Camden, New Jersey; from Boston to Glasgow. Its initial printing of 140,000 copies was one of the largest to that date of any book in history.

RE-ASSESSMENT: 1955

Literary appraisal seems to have been a quite secondary matter. Yet, if only because the images that Lewis projected came to play such a powerful role in the imagination both of America and of Europe, it is worth our time to analyze the method or lack of method that established them. Leslie Fiedler recently wrote as follows:

> . . . no one has succeeded since the age of Sinclair Lewis and Sherwood Anderson in seeing an actual American small town or a living member of the Kiwanis club. The gross pathos of Anderson or the journalistic thinness of Lewis is beside the point; for all of us, the real facts of experience have been replaced by Winesburg, Ohio, and by Babbitt; myth or platitude, we have invented nothing to replace them.

How, then, did he invent them? What props up and holds in place that terrifying buffoon, Elmer Gantry—that "gladiator laughing at the comic distortion of his wounded opponent," as he sees himself; that "barytone solo turned into portly flesh," as Lewis shows him to us?

In *Elmer Gantry* we do not have even those fitful glimmerings in the realm of sentimental reverie that we find in *Main Street* and *Babbitt*. This is a world of *total* death, of monsters without shadow. It is, in my view and on re-reading, the purest Lewis.

In *Elmer Gantry*, all is corrupt; nothing is missing but all religion and all humanity. As there are no impediments to Elmer's barbarous rise from country boob to influential preacher, so there are no qualifications of the image of barbarity. On the very fringes of the narrative, among his scores of characters, Lewis permits a few shadowy figures of good to appear—Bruno Zechlin and Jim Lefferts, the amiable skeptics who are routed before they are permitted to enter the action; Andrew Pengilly, a humane preacher who asks the most striking question in the novel ("Mr. Gantry, why don't you believe in God?") but who himself no more enters the conflict than his question enters the intellectual context; and finally, Frank Shallard, who does come and go in the story, an honest human being, but one so weak that he presents no challenge to Elmer, serves only to illustrate the ruthlessness of Elmer's power.

In the novel, values can be realized only in action, and the action of *Elmer Gantry* is an entirely one-way affair. Like most of Lewis' novels, *Elmer Gantry* is a loosely episodic chronicle, which suggests at once that there will be no sustained pressure of plot, no primary conflict about which all the action is organized and in which value will achieve a complex definition. The chronicle breaks down into three large parts, each pretty nearly independent of the others. In each event, Elmer's progress is colored and in two of them threatened by his relation with a woman, but from each Elmer emerges triumphant. The first part takes us through his Baptist education, his ordination, his first pulpit, and his escape from Lulu; the second takes us through his career as an evangelist with the fantastic Sharon Falconer; the third takes us through his experience of New Thought and his rise in Methodism, together with the decline of his marriage to Cleo and his escape from Hettie, who threatens to bring him to public ruin but who is herself routed as, in the final sentence, Elmer promises that "we shall yet make these United States a moral nation."

It should not be supposed that the frank prominence in *Elmer Gantry* of sexual appetite—a rare enough element in a Lewis novel—or the fact that it several times seems to threaten Elmer's otherwise unimpeded success, in any way

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provides the kind of dramatized counterpoint on the absence of which we are remarking, or that it in any way serves to introduce an element of human tenderness that qualifies Elmer's brutal nakedness. On the contrary, it is an integral part of his inhumanity and an integral part of the inhumanity of the religious environment within which he exists. Indeed, of all the forms of relationship that the novel presents, the sexual relation is most undilutedly brutish. Finally, its identification with the quality of Elmer's religious activity is made explicit in the climactically phantasmagoric scene in which Sharon capitulates to Elmer before an altar where she associates herself, in a ritual invocation, with all goddesses of fertility:

> It is the hour! Blessed Virgin, Mother Hera, Mother Frigga, Mother Ishtar, Mother Isis, dread Mother Astarte of the weaving arms, it is thy priestess . . . take this my brother to your bosoms . . . I am his and he is yours and ye are mine!

The extravagant absurdity of this scene is underlined by the absence in it of any candid recognition of human need or of human fulfillment. The travesty that it makes of both the sexual and the religious experience is of course to be associated with the temper of orgiastic evangelism with which the book is full.

Dramatically, however, it must be associated with such an earlier scene, as homely as this one is horrendous, in which a deaf, old retired preacher and his wife are going to bed after 27 years of marriage, and the whole of that experience of 27 years is equated with an "old hoss." "My how she could kick—Busted that buggy—" The two scenes, the extravagantly repulsive and the devastatingly barren, supplement one another; they represent the extremes of the nightmare image of a world that, totally empty of human value, monstrously, and without relief, parodies the reality.

Collecting his massive accumulations of social data with the naturalist's compulsiveness, Sinclair Lewis creates a visual world and a world of manners that appears to be absolutely solid, absolutely concrete; but what emerges in fact is an image and a criticism of middle-class society and not in the least a representative of it. Elmer Gantry, in his hypocrisy and self-deception, his brutal cruelty and fearful faith, his shallow optimism and wretched betrayals, his almost automatic identification of salvation and economic success, his loathing of all thought, his hatred of all human difference, his incapacity for any feelings but lust and fear and self-interest: in all this he carries to its extreme Sinclair Lewis' conception of the middle-class character.

Both the paradox and the secret of such a creation lie in the fact that Lewis' own intellectual and moral framework, and the framework of feeling, is extremely narrow, hardly wider than the material it contains. And the power of the creation, I would insist, lies in these limitations. The characters of this world are aware of no tradition within which their lives are located; behind them lies no history except for the faintly heroic figure of a pioneer whose sacrifice their lives have made meaningless.

It has been complained that there is a coarsening of Lewis' style in this novel, and that his view of the hinterland threatens to fall into a kind of cracker-barrel stereotype. Both charges are true, but it can be argued that both qualities make possible the kind of effect we are trying to describe. *Elmer Gantry* is the noisiest novel in American literature, the most braying, guffawing, belching novel that we have, and it is its prose that sets this uproar going; if we are to have a novel filled with jackasses and jackals, let them, by all means, bray and guffaw. On the same grounds, I would defend the "by crackee, by jimminy" crudities of the physical environment within which this noise goes on, only pointing out in addition that Lewis' old ability to invoke a concrete world—the smell of Pullman car dust, the food at a church picnic, the contents of the library of a small Methodist bishop—is still sufficiently in force to cram full the outlines of his stereotypes.

One can go further. At each of his

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three climaxes, Lewis abdicates such sense of the dramatic scene as he may have had and retreats into melodrama: once to an inversion of the farmer's daughter situation, once to a catastrophic fire, finally to a cops-and-robbers treatment of some petty criminals who have attempted to play the badger game on old Elmer. In each situation, through bad timing, through a refusal to develop even a suggestion of suspense, any potential human elements in the situation are sacrificed to the melodramatic stereotype.

And yet, out of this very weakness, cumulatively, arises again the whole impression of bare brutality which is, after all, the essential social observation.

Most novels operate through a conflict, dramatized in a plot, of social and individual interest, and the more sustained the pressures of the plot, the more likely is the individual to be forced into a position of new self-awareness, which prominently contains an awareness of his relation to his society. What is most characteristic of the novels of Sinclair Lewis, and above all of *Elmer Gantry*, is the fact that there are no such dynamics of social action, that we are presented with a static, unpersonalized image—and that *there* lies its horror.

Elmer Gantry has perhaps one brief moment of honesty. He fancies himself in love: and he resolves not to go on "with this evangelistic bunk. Trapping idiots . . . No, by God, I'll be honest! . . . I'll do it!" But then and there his rebellion against himself ends, and after that he knows nothing of self-recognition. This is about as close to it as he can come:

> "I'll have a good time with those folks," he reflected, in the luxury of a taxicab. "Only, better be careful with old Rigg. He's a shrewd bird, and he's onto me . . . Now what do you mean?" indignantly. "What do you mean by *onto me*? There's nothing to be onto! I refused a drink and a cigar, didn't I? I never cuss except when I lose my temper, do I? I'm leading an absolutely Christian life. And I'm bringing a whale of a lot more souls into churches than any of these pussy-footing tin saints that're afraid to laugh and jolly people. *Onto me* nothing!"

A character so open to self-deception is not in a position to estimate the forces that have made him so: to him, society is given, accepted, used. Elmer Gantry was raised in an important if stultifying American tradition: the protestantism of the hinterland; and Sinclair Lewis gives us a complete and devastating account of it that extends over four pages and from which I now draw fragments, reluctantly omitting Lewis' substantiating body of detail:

> The church and Sunday School at Elmer's village . . . had nurtured in him a fear of religious machinery which he could never lose. . . . That small pasty-white Baptist church had been the center of all his emotions, aside from hell-raising, hunger, sleepiness, and love. And even these emotions were represented in the House of the Lord . . . the arts and sentiments and the sentimentalities—they were for Elmer perpetually associated only with the church . . . all the music which the boy Elmer had ever heard was in church. The church provided all his painting and sculpture. . . . From the church came all his profounder philosophy . . . literary inspiration . . . here too the church had guided him. In Bible stories, in the words of the great hymns, in the anecdotes which the various preachers quoted, he had his only knowledge of literature. . . . He had, in fact, got everything from the church and Sunday School, except, perhaps any longing whatever for decency and kindness and reason.

And having neither decency nor kindness nor reason (as the novel contains no animated examples of these humane virtues), Elmer is necessarily unaware of the history in which he is involved.

That history, perhaps no larger than it is beautiful in our tradition, is nevertheless considerable, and Sinclair Lewis was aware of it even if, because he had no alternatives, he could not let his characters become so. (The tradition survives, of course: a Madison Avenue patina, extending from Washington, D. C. to Whittier, California, does not alter the motives of cynically opportunistic politicians; it merely moves boorish Elmer into gray flannel and the seat of power.) The whole brutally accurate conception of R. H. Tawney, which coupled business success and salvation, and then, in popular culture, began to pay dividends on the "saved" soul; the obvious connection between the Puritan repressions (I use Lewis' terms, not mine) and the orgiastic outbursts of middle-border evangelism; the Gospel of Service (made in Zenith) becoming the equivalent of the Gospels—all this is in the author's mind as he creates his characters, but the very nature of his creation prohibits it from in any way sharing his knowledge. The result is that the Lewis character cannot separate itself from the Lewis society; and this, in the dynamics of fiction, means that the Lewis character *has* no character apart from the society in which he is embedded, and that therefore the Lewis society is not a society at all, but a machine. And this is the moral, for criticism as for life today, of Lewis' novels, and especially of this one.

Elmer Gantry is a work of almost pure revulsion. It seems to shudder and to shake with loathing of that which it describes. The very fact that the novelist must create the image of the thing he loathes, in order to express his loathing, points to the peculiar imaginative animus that motivates this novel. We can speculate about its sources: Lewis' own early evangelistic impulses, his dedication to the missionary field now turning upon itself; the lonely, goofy boy at Oberlin in 1902, himself pushing the handles of a side-car (as Elmer does) to get to a rural Sunday School where, without conspicuous success, he doled out Bible stories; the poor fool of the hinterland who had never been given more by it than the dubious gift of deriding it, and therefore of having finally to love it. Perhaps such speculations are not much to the point. The point is only that in no novel does Sinclair Lewis more clearly announce his loathing of the social environment with which he is concerned, and in no novel does he make it more mandatory that we remain within the terrifying limits of that environment. Sinclair Lewis is not unlike Elmer Gantry. For the vicious circle in this picture exists, of course, in the fact that Elmer re-makes society in precisely the terms that society has already made him. No one can break out; everyone, including the novelist, spins more madly in the mechanical orbit.

The novelist trapped in his own hallucination of the world as a trap: this seems to be the final observation that we can make. It is not quite final. Finally, we are left with the hallucination of the novels themselves, with their monstrous images of what we both are and are not, their nearly fabulous counter-icons in our culture. *Elmer Gantry* reminds us that we continue to embrace as frequently as we recoil from this horror that at least in part we are.

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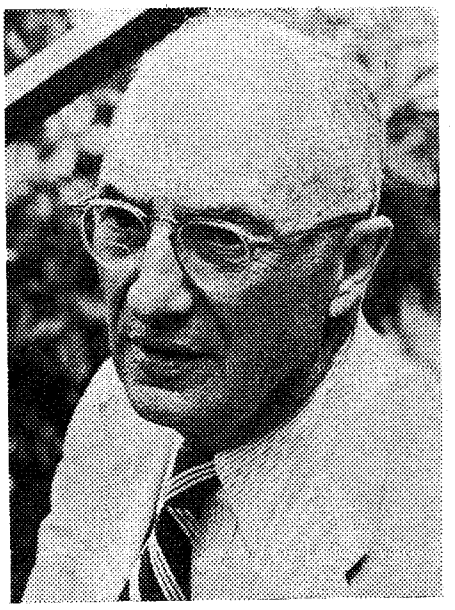
Poetry and the Making of Language

I. How Verse Forms Create Something New

by William Carlos Williams



THE American language has had one strike on it from the start: it is a language entirely separate from that which is taught us in our schools, namely the King's English.

How can we Americans be proud, as the English are of their magnificent language, concerning a language we cannot even name. In fact one of our most illustrious poets has been quoted recently, as denying the very existence of such a language as ours. To fight for it all these years has been an up-hill battle.

We have not been looking in the right place for the evidence we require to establish that there is an American language of unguessed importance to us and to the world, hidden in every phrase we utter.

We have had our Noah Websters with their redefinition of terms after American models but the English could only laugh at that, saying that if we want to speak incorrectly it will only brand us as yokels which we thus reveal ourselves to be. Even a cultured poet Ezra Pound in a recent translation from Sophocles felt himself moved to adopt a Cockney accent to show that the speaker was a vulgar person.

Lowell in his *Bigelow Papers* was similarly disturbed.

But lists of words had nothing to do with it, even a study such as Mr. Mencken made of our speech, comprehensive and revealing as it proved to be. It was truly amazing how much our language had strayed from the course of the language of Shakespeare but what of that? Could you look for a people separated from the "mother country" by an ocean and the intimate habits of several centuries to do anything else? The Greeks had their modes of speeches which differed when their cities were no more than a few miles from each other but something far more fundamental has happened this time.

The English language had come long since to a point of stasis as far, especially, as the structure of its verse is concerned. The very magnificence of the tradition which reached its peak in Shakespeare, finally reaffirmed that.

The practice of the poem has been the determining factor in determining the character that any language has taken. The whole character of any people has been fixed there. It will be the same today. Whatever America has to say that is new emotionally and intellectually will be found after the passage, of time, if Americans are to be of any importance in the world, by what they have marked upon the poems. Since the poem is formally the place where language most carries the mark of any race that uses it, the poem is most important for us to note.

In language which we know, for lack of a better term, as the American, though the structure of the poem may seem to have nothing to do with the matter, what we do with our poetic opportunities nevertheless will determine how our language is to be formed.

A new age is dawning with its opportunities and temptations but the English face it with tools they rely on because they have used them and found them trustworthy and fully able to meet any situation before this which has arisen. The language of this people is among the first of their tools.

When America began consciously to form itself, it adopted as a matter of course this foreign language and taught it in its schools. It was a language, a beautiful language, of which, unfortunately we could not know the antecedents by any direct observation.

It was a mark of our ignorance to talk incorrectly by British standards. As a consequence our wealthy and marriageable women slighted us, and who can blame them?—to gain foreign, preferably British, titles. Following suit, our writers and our painters abandoned us.

There were certain wrong-headed writers who persisted in habits which marked them of the local breed but knew, for the most part, no more than the rest of us what they were doing. That it was the use of a new language, the dawn of a new way of speaking was slow to make itself felt.

That was because a language based on the intellectual, as well as a physical conception, formerly had never been conceived. All languages had merely grown by accretion from the language which had preceded it. But upon a language stock with which we are familiar, we imagine a new principle of its physical organization, we come to something which promises much that is novel.

It was a language of heroic proportions we were abandoning, comparable to the deeds of its kings and queens of the long yellow locks. The men when they died were consigned to the flames ahorseback on ships which were towed to sea to burn until they foundered.

THE American language is much more importantly a modern language facing an old, than its name indicates. It is moreover a modern language facing a deeply entrenched language of great beauty which because of that is loved in the word. To attack in view of those circumstances is difficult, and yet where except in the rigidity of its established rules is a language such as the English to be attacked.

A variable poetic foot is aimed right at the bowels of English verse. Theoretically, such an attack is correct, if correctly used, would make it appear, as it is, mediaeval. The measurement of the poetic line of the future has to be expanded so as to take a larger grip of its material.

The grammar of the term, variable foot, is simply what it describes itself to

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be: a poetic foot that is not fixed but varies with the demands of the language, keeping the measured emphasis as it may occur in the line. Its characteristic, where it differs from the fixed foot with which we are familiar, is that it ignores the counting of the number of syllables in the line, which is the mark of the usual scansion, for a measure more of the ear, a more sensory counting. As in counting the breaths of a phrase, following speech in any language, they occur, keeping the same rhythmic structure, whatever it may be, dactylic, anapestic, amphibrachic, to which they have been dedicated.

The advantage of this practice over the old mode of measuring is that without inversion it permits the poet to use the language he naturally speaks, provided he has it well under control and does not lose the measured order of the words.

The older poets, using the fixed foot, were able to make it fill the same or at least a similar purpose with outstanding effectiveness and still keep the chosen meter. This means, of the variable foot, gives them another weapon. Shakespeare's later practice of dividing his line shows a tendency toward prose rhythms which gives him some of his most impressive effects which may be interpreted as presaging the advent of the variable foot.

The point of all this is that the dominance of the old, for Americans, the old English verse, has at last been broken by a verse-form of new dimensions. It opens a realm of structural possibilities to the poets, a new concept of the poetic foot which lays the whole field wide open. Thus a new idea of measurement is asserted in the *forms* of the verse itself. This has not been the case heretofore when deadly blank verse, echo of an echo, has been the only acceptable style of composition.

A new language stemming conjointly and without prejudice from all the old and the more recent is what is called for. It seems an impossible demand. It is only by a new and hitherto neglected because virtually unknown measure, that it can be accomplished. A measure that all languages can recognize, a common denominator according to whose terms by which no matter how diverse they will have at least that term in common.

The whole course of a prosody such as that of the English language was locally self determined. It has finally crystallized and in its present form can be seen now to be a wholly adventitious occurrence by no means to be thought of as final, once the incentive and means to change it can be discovered.

The only measured form of language, I think I have made clear, is its poetry. Therefore ineffective as it may appear to be as a weapon, in the public eye, it is only by attacking there, as Pound has correctly surmised, that our actions can have a lasting effect.

On that basis alone will a new language, let us presume it to be the American language, be fit to trust its organization. A relatively stable meter escapes the confining strictures of a merely regional application of, let us say, English. At the same time it liberates each language it faces to its own particulars, its specific meanings but not to an exclusive degree.

The variable foot is quite the ideal measure for poetry written for the stage in our day. It continues where Shakespeare himself left off, escaping the present cultish trend and, without sacrifice, his vigor, humor and beauty of line. It is a real opportunity which the modern dramatist faces. Let us see how his imagination measures up to it.

II. Are Our Poets That Influential?

by Ivor Brown

LANGUAGE is used for two main purposes (there are many minor ones). The first is for communication of facts and ideas, and this is commonly performed in books, journalism, and radio, as well as in conversation. It is vitally important that the nations of the world should understand each other easily and clearly.

In the Middle Ages the super-national intercourse was carried on in Latin: later, French was widely used. Now through pressure of power and population, Anglo-American is the medium most convenient and most extensively employed. Fortunately this language, while it naturally and properly changes with the growth of American influence, remains easily comprehended over large areas of the world. An Englishman reading New York journals has no more need to use a dictionary than has an American reading London newspapers. And long may that utilitarian language remain, slightly flexible but mainly static.

Dr. William Carlos Williams in his article is not concerned with that sort of communication. What interests him is the language which conveys the thought and feeling of the artist, and especially of the poet, and that, he claims, is a proper vehicle for showing national distinctions and for revealing or developing "an American language of unguessed importance to us and the world, hidden in every phrase we utter."

He surprised me by saying that "lists of words" have nothing to do with it. But surely language must inevitably have vocabulary as its foundation. I find it fascinating that the American language is so often much closer to old English than is modern English. Many words that the Pilgrim Fathers and the colonists took with them have vanished on the East of the Atlantic, but have endured on the West. I am constantly finding in American writing not only usages such as "gotten" for "got" but Shakespearean terms such as "deck" of cards instead of "pack" of cards, and "pumps" for shoes. "Beat it" for "go" occurs in Ben Jonson. "Sidewalk" is old English and more accurate than the new English "pavement," since the whole street and not just the side of it can be paved.

However, I shall not labor this point but come to Dr. Williams' principle assertion that "the practice of the poem has

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been the determining factor in the character that any language has taken." This is a magnificent compliment to the power of poetry, but it assumes that millions of Americans read, and are deeply affected by, the poets. As a lover of poetry I am glad to hear it; as a realist I have my doubts.

THIS strong claim for the power of poetry is only partially true of the English language. This was certainly developed and enriched by the poets, especially by Shakespeare and Milton, up to the end of the seventeenth century; above all, there must be included as poets the translators of the Bible: though their English was not formal and metrical, it was poetical in rhythm and in richness and, since the Bible was read far more than any other book, its influence on the language of the people on both sides of the Atlantic was enormous. This was fortunate because the Authorized Version was made in Jacobean England, when the English language, still young and native but represented and reinforced by Renaissance classicism, was at the top of its form.

But the eighteenth century was a prose century and the language and style used by the builders of the American Republic was the fine prose of the eighteenth century lawyers, statesmen, philosophers, and rebels. We must never forget Tom Paine.

After that came, with the immigrants and the assimilation of the immigrants, the new American language which Mencken has so fruitfully studied and defended. It is vivid, expressive, fertile, a genuine speech of the people. But I do not think that the poets had much to do with this. Dr. Williams would probably agree with me about the past: he is looking to the future. And there the poets are to be the formative influence. In his opinion, "whatever America has to say that is new intellectually and emotionally will be found, after the passage of time, if Americans are to be of any importance in the world, by what they have marked on their poems." The Americans must be themselves in their poetry, rejecting "deadly blank verse, the echo of an echo."

Nobody in his senses would suggest that American poets should be bound by the ten-syllable line which so long dominated English poetry. Nor are they. In such a poem, for example, as Robert Penn Warren's powerful tale in verse called *Brother to Dragons*, the old decasyllabic form is both employed and abandoned.

> The red-bud shall order forth its flame
> at the incitement of sun.
> The maple shall offer its golden wings
> for the incitement of air.
> Powder of oak-bloom shall prank golden the deerskin shirt of the woodsman, like fable,
> Gleaming and wind-tossed, the raw conclamation of crows shall exult in March sun from the swale-edge.

We have come a long way from Shakespeare and Tennyson, and rightly so. But there is nothing purely American in this recourse to new measures. The English poet-dramatists are not confined to the echo of echoes, the "deadly blank verse." T. S. Eliot, who despite American birth, lives and works in England is an English national and is the leading figure in English poetical writing, composes plays in poetry which many critics dismiss as only prose chopped up to look poetical. Typical lines from *The Confidential Clerk* run thus:

> His daughter. Oh, its a sordid story.
> I hated my mother. I never could see
> How Claude had ever liked her. Oh, that childhood—
> Always living in seedy lodgings
> And being turned out when the neighbours complained.

Christopher Fry employs a more fecund vocabulary but, like Eliot, is quite ready to desert the old, iambic beat, as in these lines from *Venus Observed*:

> Why, Reedbeck, how marvellous it is to moulder.
> Think how you would have felt when you were lying
> Grubbing in your mother's womb,
> With only a wall to look at,
> If you could have seen in your embryonic eye
> The realm of bryony, sloes, rose-hips,
> And a hedge's ruin, a golden desuetude,
> A countryside like a drowned angel
> Lying in shallow water, every thorn
> Tendering a tear. Think, Reedbeck,
> Think of the wonder of such glimmering woe;
> How in a field of milk-white haze the lost
> Apollo glows and wanders towards noon;
> The wind-blown webs are brighter,
> The rolling apples warmer than the sun.

That I find beautiful in itself, as well as unusual in its scansion. But I do not find that it is erecting a new English language while it is developing a new vein of English poetry.

In all the arts, in many if not all places, the artist has broken with the old forms. The painters make new and violent attacks on the eye, with distortions and abstractions, instead of soothing it with the suave rhythms of the old realism: music shakes off old harmonies: sculpture reverts to primitive and lumpish mass-effect: poetry, disdainful of what it thinks to be sing-song, abandons the serene melody for the harsh explosion. But this is a general tendency and adds to that general range of artistic expression on canvas, in stone, or in sound. But the new poetry does not, in my opinion, change language. It only alters the use of language. Shakespeare and his contemporaries did make a new language: Eliot and Fry are only making new patterns, as Wordsworth did when he fled from the heroic couplet and the classic style of verse.

DR. WILLIAMS thinks otherwise. He pays the highest possible tribute to Parnassus by his belief that the meters there employed by the servants of the Muses will percolate to the market-place. My natural wish is to agree with him, because that would prove the sovereignty of the artist in a world where his voice is that of a tiny minority. But the wish does not govern my thought, and I believe that the speech of the street will be unaffected by what occurs on the Parnassian heights. This does not make me a pessimist. A rapidly increasing people, so vigorous in its attack on life's possibilities as in the American nation, is not going to be dull or only derivative in its use of words.

In London, I have been told by teachers that the children speak school-English in school, and go home to speak another language with another accent; that is the popular "Londonese." Incidentally the influence of American, through films and show business, is largely influencing the English vocabulary and English accents of the multitude. British singers of British popular songs now use American inflections. But the language, and the noise, is a popular, not a poetic, creation.

As I said, I would like to agree with Dr. Williams that the poets will be the creators of tomorrow's language in America and possibly in all countries: he has stated a hope, but I cannot see that he has proved a case.

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The Highbrow and the Housewife

by Leo Marx

Discovery is one of several paper-bound collections of new writing now on the market. It first appeared early in 1953, and the sixth issue, just out, announces the suspension of publication. In less than three years *discovery* has published 70 stories, some of them much longer than conventional periodicals print, 89 poems, and a dozen pieces of non-fiction—all hitherto unpublished Besides, it has discovered 17 new writers.

Anyone unhappy about American writing today should be heartened by reading *discovery*. He may not find anything absolutely first rate, but neither will he doubt the vigor and resourcefulness of our young writers. On the other hand, *discovery* probably is finished. "We have failed," writes editor Vance Bourjaily, though he continues to discuss possibilities of a future reappearance. For so useful an outlet of independent expression to close in this day of universal standardization is a real cause for concern.

discovery No. 6 (Pocket Books; $.35).

If there is a lesson in this failure, however, we do not learn it from the editor. In a confusing farewell statement, he contends that *discovery* has been a "victim . . . of a change of concept." He means that it was conceived as a new sort of literary magazine, but since it came out irregularly, carried no advertising and had no subscribers, it proved to be neither a magazine nor a book.

But this fact scarcely explains the failure. Indeed, by any reasonable standard, *discovery* has been an immense success. According to Bourjaily, it sold an average of 150,000 copies. When we consider how many people buy the little magazines that print similar material, that is an impressive figure. In his wildest moments the editor of the *Partisan Review* cannot imagine a circulation half that size. But editor Bourjaily does not discuss the cold economic facts. He leaves us with an impression that *discovery* might not have failed had it begun with more modest expectations.

The original ambition of the editors was fantastic. (In the first issue John W. Aldridge was listed as an editor, along with Bourjaily.) Their opening pronouncement guaranteed complete freedom of expression. In the mode of a left-bank manifesto, they promised that there would be no limitations of subject-matter or length, no coddling of "pressure groups," and no need for slickness or temporizing. A fine program! The fantastic part is that they also expected to sell *discovery* "in real mass."

It seems they were banking on a revaluation of the reading public based on the success of the paper-bound reprint trade. They accordingly rejected the accumulated experience of magazine editors and their "cynical portrait of the American reader as a juvenile oaf." They would offer him (American Reader) no more "synthetic moonshine," but the *real thing*. No one who values literature could be unsympathetic. But now that the enterprise has failed, what about American Reader? One hesitates to consign an entire populace to the oaf category.

But if it's necessary, let's include the editors of *discovery*. In evidence of a certain oafishness I submit the official *discovery*, or conspiratorial, theory of mass culture. It is predicated on the idea that readers of popular magazines are held in mental bondage by a league of cunning advertising men and writers. It is essentially a melodramatic fable in which the heroine (American Reader) is brain-washed by the sleek editor of *The Saturday Evening Post*. By mistake, however, she picks up a copy of *discovery* at the A & P, comes to her senses, swoons into the arms of Serious Editor and all is well.

In fairness it must be admitted that the editors of *discovery* did not actually plan a raid on the *Post's* subscription list. In fact, they did not specify what sort of magazines, if any, their prospective mass of customers had been in the habit of reading. All they said was that their audience was waiting, that it bought "serious paper-bound reprint books," that it had "always existed," but that it had "never before been given an inexpensive and widely distributed literary magazine." But they did not make a very serious effort to know these people. Unlike the calculating editors of the slicks, who design moonshine to suit popular taste, the editors of *discovery* proposed to win their mass following by ignoring its wishes. "We mean to edit *discovery*," they proclaimed, "for its

A Friend Revisited

BESIDE the door
She stood whom I had known before.
I saw the work of seven years
In graying hair and worried eyes,
And in a smile:
"Find in me only what appears,
And let me rest awhile."

Though it had not been honesty
Always to say the sudden word
When she was young,
I liked the old disguise
Better than what I heard—
False laughter on the tongue
That once had made all efforts to seem free.

I do not ask for final honesty,
Since none can say
"This is my motive, this is me,"
But I will pray
Deliberation and a shaping choice
To make a speaking voice.

DONALD HALL

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writers rather than its readers, in the firm conviction that the role of literature in human history is to lead and not to follow."

SUCH arrogance when accompanied, as it is here, by allegations of respect for the intelligence of the public, is in my opinion intolerable. It seriously hurts the cause of letters. If *discovery,* published in this spirit, attracted 150,000 readers, how many more might have read it if its editors had thought to consider their desires? Of course certain compromises would have been necessary. For one thing, there is something too austere and technical-sounding about books devoted to "writing." Is it reasonable to assume so widespread an interest in literary technique? Most readers aren't interested in writing, but in writing *about* something — in kinds of subject or treatment. Would some concessions to such simplicity preclude seriousness or freedom of expression?

The fate of *discovery* evokes that classic cycle of disillusionment followed by intellectuals in democracies. They undertake an enterprise with the highest aspirations; a far too flattering conception of public taste; a notion of the artist's ability to lead beyond all reason; and a hint of secret contempt for ordinary men such that, when the enterprise fails, they may think themselves trapped in a society of unregenerate oafs. It is too bad so many literary projects begin in this all-or-nothing frame of mind. They end by aggravating tender feelings. One possible safeguard against such impulsiveness comes to mind: a more vivid sense of history. If we had one, we might not so often behave as if mass literacy had been on trial for a thousand years.

discovery is a perfect token of our age. Its real inspiration, source of the excessive optimism of the editors, had little to do with literature. It arose from our current national mania for efficient packaging and marketing. What could be more characteristic of America today than the notion of dispensing avant-garde writing in drugstores and supermarkets? This is somewhat paradoxical in view of the conspicuous failure of the writers themselves to get in touch with the super-fatted life we live.

To generalize recklessly, much of the material in *discovery* reads like an attenuated version o the writing of the thirties. It is not at all like the technically precise fiction admired in fancy quarterlies today. These writers are concerned with the experience of harried minorities, with the oppressed individual struggling to sustain dignity in the face of a vast heartless social order. Of course the theme deserves attention, but one would also welcome some insights into the expanding area—more characteristic and enigmatic—of comfort and complacency. It is difficult to say this, alas, without sounding like one of those routine editorials in *Life*—the ones that call upon our writers to celebrate American abundance and power. But *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* and his simple gratitude for small favors is not the only answer.

Is it possible to say *No* without ignoring the comfortable reality? One way is indicated by William Styron's fine story "Long March" which appeared in *discovery No. 1.* Styron focuses on the experience of several reserve officers recalled to duty during the Korean emergency, and so he manages to place our flannel-suited careers in some historical perspective. He provides only one or two quick glimpses of domestic contentment, but since they are set against a panorama of remorseless military idiocy, they take on a wonderfully delicate power. To these men suddenly back in combat dress our lives between wars seem but a childish revery—placid, mindless, comfortable, unreal.

Another perhaps more promising approach is indicated by Alan Harrington. It takes a power of imagination to wrench us free of illusions so satisfying, and Harrington does it in a free-wheeling travesty on other-directedness. An excerpt from his recently published satire, *The Revelations of Dr. Modesto,* appeared in *discovery No. 3.* He writes in the manner of Evelyn Waugh, but unfortunately his bold invention carries him too far from the actual world he satirizes. Nevertheless he has demonstrated the usefulness of satire at a time when realism is likely to compound complacency. Satire perhaps is our best resource against smugness. Moreover, it gives heart to other writers. For like the rest of us, they can be immobilized by the cosmic ambiguities of an age like our own. The wonder is, reading *discovery*, that so many of them continue to produce. We need them, as we need a more successful *discovery* to gain them an audience.

In the Day of a False Messiah

by Irving Howe

IN the mid-seventeenth century, the east European Jews were decimated by the rebellion-pogrom of the Cossack leader Chmielnicki. Many of the survivors were then caught up in a religious enthusiasm that derived, all too clearly, from their total desperation. They began to summon apocalyptic fantasies, to indulge in long-repressed religious emotions which, paradoxically, were stimulated by the pressures of Cabbalistic asceticism.

As if in response to their yearning, a messianic pretender named Sabbatai Zevi appeared in the Near East. Everything that rabbinical Judaism had confined or suppressed found release in Sabbatai's movement: the temptation of the doctrine that faith alone will save, the impulse to evade the limits of mundane life by forcing a religious transcendence, the union of erotic with mystical appetites, the lure of a demonism which the very hopelessness of the Jewish situation rendered plausible. In 1665-6 Sabbatianism reached an orgiastic climax, whole communities out of a conviction that the messiah was at hand, abandoning the Mosaic law and the inhibitions of exile.

Their hopes were soon smashed. Confronted with persecution by the Turkish Sultan, Sabbatai converted to Mohammedanism. Nonetheless, Sabbatianism survived for a time as a secret cult which celebrated Sabbatai as the apostate saviour, who had been required to descend to the depths of the world in order to emerge on the heights of salvation.

Satan in Goray, a short novel translated from the Yiddish, shows the Jews of a small Polish town abandoning them-

Satan in Goray, by Isaac Bashevis Singer; translated by Jacob Sloan (Noonday; $3).

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selves, in a transport of mass delusion, to the false messiah. It is a remarkable book, brilliant, enigmatic, and it deserves the attention of anyone interested in modern literature. The author, a younger brother of the novelist I. J. Singer, is one of the two or three most gifted living writers of Yiddish prose: his command of Yiddish idiom, his range of metaphor, his fierce short-breathed rhythms mark him as virtuoso. Though he has written an interesting longer novel, he is at his best in short forms, grotesque and lyrical outbursts.

Like most Yiddish fiction, *Satan in Goray* is focussed on the community, its main theme, as its main "character," being the collective destiny of the Jews in exile. The norm of communal life is so deeply ingrained in the traditional Jewish imagination that any deviation will constitute a significant action for the Yiddish reader, one inherently possessing those potentialities for conflict and disaster that go to make up the idea of the dramatic. Goray, an obscure Jewish town in Poland, tries to reestablish its life after the Chmielnicki massacres, but people cannot go on as before, not even Jews trained in suffering and endurance. The Rabbi who warns against ecstasies born of mere desire is pushed aside. The town is overwhelmed by a millenial hysteria. First come the ascetics, who break down the sanctions of rabbinic law, and then the possessed and the depraved who experiment in sin and satanism with the justification that the dawn of the messianic age means the lapsing of the Commandments.

SINGER has peopled his novel with a number of sharply-etched figures: a self-mutilating ascetic who brings the Sabbatian word to Goray and then expires in anguish when his hope is betrayed, a corrupt and dionysian ritual slaughterer who rules Goray in its moment of abandonment, and a haunting epileptic girl who symbolizes the martyrdom of the community, being married first to the ascetic, then to the ritual slaughterer, and finally being entered by the spirit of a dead person.

The prose of *Satan in Goray* is both fast and rich. Singer piles up local detail after detail, partly as a means of authenticating a novel that runs the risk of abstractness and rhetoric because of its concentration on collective life, and partly because he has an enormous interest in everything that is strange and

—Lionel S. Reiss

colorful. But for all its local richness, the over-all structure of the book is rigidly economical. Singer makes the boldest elisions in his narrative, cuts through the usual packing of the Yiddish novel, and drives toward his climax with a furious energy. His materials are thoroughly traditional, but he himself is a modern writer who has learned the lessons of Flaubert and Turgenev. Yet because he remains partly attached to the Yiddish literary tradition, he can bring surprising resources to his work. At the climax of the novel, when the epileptic girl is being exorcised of the *dybbuk* and the tension has become almost unbearable, Singer suddenly turns to the meandering archaic mode of the old Yiddish tale, and the result is not merely a fascinating *tour de force* but the achievement of perspective and a kind of serenity.

Partly his power derives from an ability to hold such contrary elements as the miraculous and the skeptical, the moral and the exotic in a delicate tension. At times the style of *Satan in Goray* seems almost *as if* it were the style of a man possessed, so thoroughly does he give himself to the subject; yet he also maintains a rigorous distance, one is always aware of the *conditional* nature of his absorption in the Sabbatian experience. He bring to play upon Jewish life a mind that delights in everything that is antique and curious yet is drenched with the assumptions of modern psychology, and the result is an exquisite balance between the impulse to surrender to his subject and the temptation to deny it.

The translation is extremely good, though it communicates more of the color than the pace of the original Yiddish. But I must quarrel with Mr. Sloan's introduction. He writes: "As Isaac Bashevis Singer . . . reminds us: once the core of faith is lost, Satan must triumph and the forces of evil overwhelm mankind." This gratuitous religiosity has nothing whatever to do with the novel, not even if one could bring a testimonial from the author proclaiming his piety. For the point of Singer's achievement is that it does not lend itself to any such obvious or pre-fabricated point: he accepts the Sabbatian episode as a human experience, tragic and absurd in its own terms, and not requiring any contemporary tags in order to validate it.

STILL more questionable is Mr. Sloan's effort to assimilate the Sabbatian collapse to Twentieth century politics. "Like the people of Goray," he writes, "we too have found that . . . there are no simple and complete solutions to the tragic complications of being fallible human beings is an incomprehensible universe." This sentence, laden as it is with the overtones of our contemporary wisdom, indicates that Mr. Sloan has absorbed the message of Edmund Burke or, if one wants to get right up to date, of Russell Kirk; but it has nothing to do with *Satan in Goray*.

The events of our time are enacted by men who, whatever their disagreements,

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all accept in common the necessity for action *within* history. But the traditional Jewish judgment, which plays an implicit role in the development of Singer's novel, is that salvation cannot come through history. At the end of the archaic fable that climaxes *Satan in Goray*, the "moral"—toward which we may expect so sophisticated a writer as Singer to retain a certain ironic reserve—is stated: "Let none attempt to force the Lord: To end our pain within the world . . ." The heresy of false messianism is that in trying to force a premature apocalypse it enters not the realm of the sacred but the realm of the secular. Messianism is thus reduced to historical action, and historical action itself viewed largely as the province of the demonic. This, at least, is the working imaginative hypothesis of *Satan in Goray*, and regardless of whether Singer as a person fully agrees with it one thing should be clear: it has nothing in common with and should not be assimilated to, the problems of modern politics, all of which are rooted in the common assumption of secular historicity.

Satan in Goray stands in its own right, a work of the imagination which neither permits nor requires easy statements. It is a work that the readers of the *New Republic* should turn to—though one can't help reflecting that even if every *NR* reader did rush out to buy it, that would come to a small percentage of those now absorbed in the troubles of Marjorie Morningstar. But for anyone who wants to distinguish between the genuine possibilities of the Yiddish literary imagination and its debasement in American mass culture, the comparison between Singer and Wouk should be highly instructive—no less instructive than say, a comparison between Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed* and Rabbi Liebman's *Peace of Mind*.

Shadows on the African Wall

by Daniel M. Friedenberg

AFTER years of preparation, the long awaited *Inside Africa* of John Gunther has at last appeared. This enormous work, comprising over 950 pages, was written with the express purpose, in the words of the author, to supply all the information the ordinary reader needs to know about Africa.

Gunther's latest book is as much a faithful image of America itself as it is of Africa: extraordinary bulk, a worship of the big, as though size adds to quality; dazzling range of statistics, as though facts themselves explain ideas; emphasis on sex, violence, local color and the anecdote. Like America also, the vigorous flame of Gunther's early liberalism is much muted and the same sober, damp and "realistic" considerations which are making American foreign policy a shambles can be seen at play here.

Inside Africa, by John Gunther (Harper; $6).

But *Inside Africa* will certainly be one of the most successful books of the year. For the new formula of Gunther is to out-Bowles Paul Bowles and the school of romantic writers on Africa, to mix H. Rider Haggard and politics in a kind of exotic hash that should appeal to all varieties of reader. If one would know the habits of honeymooning lions, how to prepare human flesh into magic paste, the gaunt feel of the Sahara at midnight, sex practices of Arab sultans or Bakatu tribesmen, adventures of the French Security camel soldiers, this book is the dish.

It is impossible to attempt a resumé of all that *Inside Africa* contains. Certain underlying facts must constantly be kept in mind, however, as a preliminary to any discussion of this explosive continent.

Religion: of approximately 200 million Africans, there are 60 million Moslems (other estimates usually upgrade this to 80 million), 21 million Christians and some 112 million pagans.

White Men: in all Africa, there are only 5 million white men of European extraction: 2.5 million of them are concentrated in the Union of South Africa; 1.5 million in French North Africa; while the rest of the whole continent holds only 1 million more. These figures may be illuminated by some fantastic examples. In Nyasaland there are 2.5 million blacks and 4,000 whites, in French Togoland almost 1 million blacks and 841 whites, in Sierra Leone close to 2 million blacks and not even 600 whites. Nigeria, the largest African country in population, has more than 30 million blacks and approximately 12,000 whites.

Backwardness: tropical Africa has the lowest rate of caloric food intake in the entire world. The European position throughout Africa rests almost exclusively on the exploitation of cheap native labor, and the white man's future is inversely affected—even more so politically than economically—by any collective rise in native standards.

Independence: Liberia, Libya, Ethiopia and Egypt are independent countries today. The Gold Coast and Nigeria have been promised self-government within the British Commonwealth next year. Somalia, the former Italian colony, will become independent in 1960. Tunisia has taken long strides to autonomy. The African states already independent or on the point of self-government comprise 44 percent of the peoples and 31 percent of the area.

Thus, the danger zones in Africa may be easily depicted. Portuguese and Spanish Africa are so backward that the modern concept of nationalism has not as yet seeped in. The Belgian Congo, because of its fabulous mineral resources, is such a profitable commercial operation that the native discontent is bought off: indeed, actually considered a cost factor in the production curve. Due to the mosquito, very few whites have settled in the British colonies on the West Coast, and the only trouble spots for the English are along the Indian Ocean—Kenya and the Rhodesias—where the white colonials are intent on fixing a way of life outmoded in the home country.

THE FRENCH difficulty is centered in North Africa, where their largest groups of white settlers are also located.

Morocco is the fulcrum of French policy in North Africa and John Gunther rightly spends much time analyzing what has occurred there. Unfortunately, the author is at his worst in this section and seems to be more concerned with sex, mediaeval castles, luncheons and colorful individuals than the life and death struggle now taking place. He strains to be impartial and merely ends contradictory, for the conclusion—"Obviously Morocco has a long way to go before being ready for self-govern-

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ment"—does not follow from his own analysis. To his credit, however, it may be said that Mr. Gunther's honesty is always greater than his courtesy toward his Gallic hosts.

The arguments for Moroccan independence are so common to readers of better publications that they need not be repeated here. The French viewpoint, aside from the usual nonsense, rests on what has been called *"la mission civilisatrice,"* or what Marshal Lyautey, the conqueror of Morocco, defined as: *"la force; la grandeur; le désinteressement; la simplicité."* Because of their superior civilization, they know better what the true interests of the Moroccans are than the deluded Moroccans.

As Gunther points out, it is true that sovereignty does not automatically bring democracy, liberty or progress. It may even produce repression and economic stagnation, as in former Italian Eritrea. The French civil service, as a mass, is probably more tolerant, more impregnated with an inner meaning of equality, and certainly more civilized in the ordinary use of the word, than the Moroccan middle class which seeks to supplant it. But all this is secondary. The author quotes an extraordinary phrase of Abdal Krim, the great Berber leader now in exile: "The French will stay in North Africa as long as France exists. But does France exist?" This seemingly malicious remark has a profound root. For France no longer *exists*, that is, lives in and understands the meaning of our century.

Colonialism is dying and all the other nations but France are beginning to realize that in troubled areas repressive political domination simply doesn't *pay off*. A recent budget in Algeria totalled 72 billion francs, of which 28 billion came from the French federal budget; 58 percent of the total Tunisian budget and 50 percent of the Moroccan budget normally are contributed by France. When to these enormous peacetime subsidies are added the load of soldiers needed to maintain foreign rule, it can easily be seen that old style colonialism is frightfully expensive. It is only *la gloire*, the dripping sentimentality of hack generals reinforced by the white settlers, that is causing the moral trauma of the French people. On the contrary, the lesson of the United States in Latin America has been well learned by the British.

American moneyed interests have never needed political domination to achieve their aims. In the most evolved form, as in Venezuela, the United States companies invest money in ventures that purely domestic capital cannot exploit. A high return is received, of which a stipulated percentage goes back to the nation involved. Contrary to common belief, labor is usually paid the same or higher wages than it would receive in the local market. This is the new pattern of colonialism that the English are practicing in Africa. Lever Bros., Ltd., for instance, can say more, and with greater authority, through a black than a white mouth on the Gold Coast. But the French have not enough national wisdom to forfeit the prestige to secure the cash. That is why, with the most brilliant Cartesian logic on their side, they are wrong, dead wrong, if right in the political sense means moving in consonance with world ideas.

KENYA, the second bloodiest area outside Morocco in Africa today, has a very different problem. Kenya is a country which can only be correctly viewed by avoidance. The thin white paste of Europeans is so pervasive, the cities of Nairobi and Mombasa such apparent ramparts of white civilization, that one draws a totally false impression of the colony on brief acquaintance. The English settlers have crowded the natives so cleverly together in preserves or city slums that the population disproportion is barely noted. An English friend of liberal disposition stood on the main street of Nairobi one day with the reviewer and, pointing to the surging crowd of white men, said in amazement: "They want to push us from this!" And his reaction is the self-mesmerized impression one feels on the spot. But this is only a mirage. For the white man must disassociate himself from the reflex automatic feeling of being white in a Mau Mau ridden country in order to see the Kenya problem clearly.

Kenya, as is well known, has a population of 3 whites to every 550 blacks, while in the neighboring territories of Uganda and Tanganyika the proportion is about 1:1500. But this hardly tells the story. It is worth quoting Mr. Gunther on land statistics:

> In 16 months (1903-4) 220,000 highland acres were transferred to 342 individual Europeans, and moreover huge tracts—blocks of 300,000 acres or more—went to European syndicates. In 1901 there were exactly 13 European settlers in the whole of Kenya; in 1911, 3,000; in 1921, 9,000. A law was enacted, the celebrated Crown Lands Ordinance, which gave the Governor the right (with certain restrictions) "to grant, lease, or otherwise alienate in his Majesty's behalf any Crown lands for any purpose and on any terms and conditions as he may think fit." Another ordinance defined the borders of the White Highlands (16,000 miles) and forbade any ownership in this whole area by anybody not a white European. . . . The total white population of Kenya is 42,000 but only about 4,000 whites are active settlers on the land, and only about 7,000 in all are engaged in agriculture.

To paraphrase Gunther, 4,000 whites have 16,000 square miles or about 25 percent of the arable land, and 5.5 million Africans have to live on the rest. But the most ironic part is that Kenya, with its sister South Rhodesia, the East African colonies with the largest white population, are the only two insolvent British areas and, like their French counterparts to the north, must be supported from home. Social democratic England of today is supporting a less-than-one-percent minority of aristocratic expatriates on feudal estates at the expense of the Exchequer, and encouraging them to break every civilized standard by making mass killing of human beings a legal sport.

Again as in North Africa, it is the white colonists, more than repressive home government, who are the nub of the problem. Mr. Gunther quotes a Kenya settler: " 'We have educated the Kukes much too fast. They should have had two hundred years, not forty, to jump from barbarism to the present. They are no more fit for government than to be pilots of jet aircraft. They read Shakespeare in the most filthy huts.' " Of the entire white population of Kenya, on the other hand, only *two* persons speak the Kikuyu language.

THE defeat of the Mau Mau—and Mau Mau is a filthy and pernicious belief no matter how legitimate its economic base—is almost complete at the present time. Instead of evolving into a doctrine of universal appeal, an African nationalism, it became a tribal blood cult with no appeal to the neighboring black peoples. In that Mau Mau is almost strictly a Kikuyu affair, the Britons have been able with impunity to use

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Galla, Wasai, Somali and Kipsigis tribesmen to aid them. But if the English do not institute land reforms, the urge to revolt will rise up on a more profound base. For the breakdown in traditional ways of life has stirred the native to replace the destroyed pattern, either going backward to Pan Islam in the north or an equivalent of Mau Mau in the black lands, or forward to more revolutionary concepts.

As the white man continues to prevent the newly educated African from attaining positions of social status in the classic war of middle class against the agrarian feudal nobility (European, Arab or black chieftian) he makes his own position more and more shaky. Mau Mau is only a blind alley in the long struggle toward economic emancipation of which nationalism is the obvious face.

John Gunther is at his best when analyzing the tragedy of the Union of South Africa.

To make the image of what is happening in the Union clearer, we may project its racial problem on the United States. Taking the last official census in this country, which shows a total population of 160 million, let us imagine South Africa as America. Assume that the Dutch, who settled New York at about the same time as Capetown, instead of merging with the English who followed, trekked inland and settled throughout the Midwest, guarding their native language and customs. Since the Dutch in South Africa are only 1.5 millions or about 12 percent of the total population, on an exact proportionate basis they would amount to some 19 million persons in America, of whom about 20 percent would carry hints of Asiatic blood from early intermarriage or miscegenation with the aboriginal Indians. The English, who permanently settled along the Eastern Seaboard, by the same proportionate analysis would now amount to somewhat less than 13 million persons. Pure red Indians, still speaking their many tongues and living according to the most primitive standards, would total over *109 million persons* or almost 70 percent of the entire population. Indians with a strong infusion of white blood, speaking English and living among the English along the Eastern Seaboard, would total 13 million persons, or about the same number as their English neighbors. Hindus who had been imported to work the fields on the West Coast, also speaking their own distinct language and looking for intellectual leadership to their native land, would constitute a hard separate group of about 5 million persons. And, adding to the mélange, a conclave of Malays on the Canadian frontier would constitute a community of half a million persons.

Put in these terms, the dilemma of South Africa may be more comprehensible to Americans. And to bring the matter to clearer focus, imagine the small Midwestern group of Dutch (the whites, in a proportion of 1:5 or 32 million persons alone can vote, of course) dominating the political life by the most outrageous gerrymandering, while at the same time refusing additional white immigration because of religious prejudice toward Catholics and modern-minded Protestants. To add to bedlam, the Dutch, although dominant politically, would be poor farmers while the English along the Eastern Seaboard would have control of all banking and industry. But, capping the whole problem, although completely subdued, the native red Indians would be breeding at a rate 50 percent greater than the whites.

Now let us see how the Boers, which literally means "farmers" in Dutch, reacted to the problem. As Mr. Gunther mentions, the Union code as recently amended by the Nationalist government creates a kind of National Register, with every person ticketed, photographed and identified by race; makes mandatory at the whim of the state complete segregation, not only for residences but for all business as well; forbids marriage between Europeans and non-Europeans and makes sexual intercourse a crime between whites and the members of other races; segregates transportation and public places; empowers the government to declare a state of emergency and thence to proceed, dispensing with legislature and courts, to rule by proclamation; makes it a crime to support campaigns for the repeal or modification of *any* law; considers it a criminal act for an African servant to quit his job without permission or to be "impertinent" to a master; gives the state complete control of native education, including all mission schools; hands to the Minister of Labor the right to determine at his own discretion what occupation the members of any race may engage in.

To illustrate that these are not mere abstract measures, but actual implements of policy, we may refer to two recent examples. The government this year will use its unlimited power regarding segregation of races to move out all Africans from the western region of Cape Province. This action, called by Gunther one of the biggest forced movements of a population in history, might be sardonically compared with Himmler's project to transplant the entire Dutch people (the ancestors of the Boers) to Siberia because of their stubborn opposition to German racial policy.

Gunther's answer to all this is curious. He asks himself the question: Is South Africa Fascist? and answers, Not quite, Not yet.

Indeed, Gunther is right. The Union is not Fascist. It is *Nazi*. The Union has based its law on race supremacy as a desperate response to a sick situation. The individual has rights only insofar as the state admits them. The Union has deliberately fixed an economic and social mold on society in order to preserve the crumbling power of a minority. The Union has rejected humanistic and international considerations as sentimental and muddy thinking, usually considered as inspired by Communists. The Union has elevated national history, racial purity, force and unswerving devotion to the cause of *Afrikans* as the emblem of heroism.

And, my brother from New York or Illinois or Kansas, what would you do if you lived as a small minority among 109 million alien blacks speaking a different laguage and deriving from a different culture? Have you had a single sleepless night over the murder of Till in Mississippi? Has your hand shaken when you read that a minister in the South was shot down in broad daylight because he urged his fellow citizens to vote, and that no one has even bothered to search for the killers? Be not so proud, be not so scornful, be not so smug in your warm secure bed, when you learn that the white population of the Union of South Africa is exactly in the same proportion to the blacks as the white part of the human species to the colored. For the state of South Africa is the world of tomorrow and John Gunther's disgust, when not followed by an action of some obscure kind and in some obscure way to change the nature of things, will only be looked at by the future with ironic contempt. Is it really *Inside Africa* or more likely *Inside Ourselves?*

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Fattening for the Slaughter

by Dachine Rainer

WHILE the third of Norman Mailer's novels, *The Deer Park*, is superior to the preceding two, stylistically it favors both its predecessors; it is an allegory, as was *Barbary Shore*, and it is written with that intense, dense, garrulous naturalism evident in *The Naked and the Dead*, and that characterizes both the best and worst of the school of American fiction which includes Dreiser, Dos Passos, Wolfe. However, Mailer's writing is never exclusively slice-of-life, does not suffer from the simple-minded representationalism which has been a drag on American fiction for so many decades.

The Deer Park, by Norman Mailer (Putnam; $4).

Once one has niched *The Deer Park*—as a cross between naturalism and symbolism—one perceives the inadequacy of the categorization, for it is in the nearly perfect blending of these two styles—the complex, artful, almost ritualistic plan, and the naturalistic manner of its execution—that the fame of *The Deer Park* will reside. Mailer has developed a meticulous concern for structure and a brilliant flair for characterization; he seldom slops over the confines of the narrative; and although he will never be a frugal writer, he has acquired, among much else, a respect for the value of economy.

The setting of *The Deer Park* is Hollywood under the shadow of the Committee on Un-American Activities. The hero, a psychologically disabled war veteran is, fortuitously, but not implausibly, thrust into the social world of actors, directors, producers and assorted underworld characters in a resort town somewhere south of Hollywood, where he is in an excellent position to observe, and to a limited degree, participate in their intrigues and frantic, competitive struggles.

The locale veers between the resort and the cinema capital itself, but a larger area is symbolically intended: *The Deer Park* is a portrait of the reserve where humans are fattened for destruction. Mailer creates a thoroughly believable atmosphere of pretentiousness and thinly veiled commercialism. The minor characters — pimps, prostitutes, drug addicts, sex enthusiasts and alcoholics—are sensitively conceived. Against this background, the author presents his major characters and the major concern of the novel: an investigation of various levels of self-awareness and, conversely, of moral depravity. Mailer ranges from Marion Faye, a malevolent character existing only for the destruction of others —through Charles Eitel, a talented movie director who has been blacklisted for refusing to testify, who loses his integrity in trying to regain his standing in the industry—to Sergius O'Shaugnessy, a young incorruptible saved from sanctimony by his recognition that heroism and morality are forms of vanity.

Mailer develops his minor characters with loving conscientiousness: an actress who has no personal existence outside of publicity to further her career; (a terribly amusing bit occurs where she is making love and talking on the telephone at the same time).

Collie Munshin, the direct agent of Eitel's capitulation, is, however unoriginal, another superbly drawn minor character. Collie is the nickname for Carlyle, and one can hear the first generation Jewish parent struggling with the difficult phonetics and emerging with a gutteral Collie. The very name Collie is a stroke of genius—he is a veritable dog of a man—obsequious and fawning to his superiors, licking the hand that feeds him, barking at the heels of rivals and strangers; ("stranger" is used in the sense in which any man may be acquainted with but inexplicable to another). Eitel was just such a man to Collie, and he could not rest until he had reduced Eitel to proportions comprehensible to him, and that served to reduce the burden of guilt he bore. Collie's weakness exists in his desire for power and recognition, and his complete willingness to sacrifice anyone, including himself, to these ends.

The true hero, Sergius O'Shaugnessy, although he represents the level to which Mailer's own thinking has attained, is a minor character; the novel revolves around the destruction of Charles Eitel as a creative person. The mechanics of his capitulation is magnificently delineated, and represents, in my opinion, a high point in character study in the contemporary novel.

The Deer Park is neither stuffy, nor dogmatic; it is in the best, now nearly archaic tradition of the genre, entertaining and wise. Despite its faults, and these are not few (too many words, the structure is not sufficiently craftsmanlike, the writing is sometimes murky, and Mailer is both excessively sensual and lacking in aesthetic sensibility) *The Deer Park* has much to recommend it. In addition to his furious energy and true ear, Norman Mailer is *sympatico* with humanity, and gives evidence of a preoccupation with all its affairs on a level rare in American fiction.

A Beethoven Dance

IT'S a good enough life!
And you foot it featly to the tap
As Maestro Ludwig gives the step:
Which times the children's skipping rope,
The tall dark dancer's loving work,
And all the turns the living movers shape.

It's a good enough life—
When you set your foot within the track
Nor back nor forward too much look;
But make the love you love to make
Between the shafts of light and dark,
Allegro, brisk—andante, walk.

And foot it ever featly toward that place
Where what's the music all the dancers ask.

SHERMAN CONRAD

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Southern Exposure

by William R. Taylor

MR. THORP'S *A Southern Reader*, it seems to me, is one of the most revealing source-books about our national life that has ever been put together. It certainly provides an almost photographic picture of life in the South for those who reject or greet with skepticism the more general formulations of professional historians. Ironically enough, this is not the work of a Southerner at all, but rather the achievement of an ingenious Yankee "tinker" (I suppose he would be called) who travelled energetically among his many Southern friends and, so he modestly relates, listened to their proposals "over bourbon and branch-water."

A Southern Reader, edited by Willard Thorp (Knopf; $7.50).

The selections which make up *A Southern Reader* range over the whole period of American life from the period of colonial settlement to the recent decision of the Supreme Court on school segregation, but they focus mainly in the period before and after the Civil War. They touch on a great many different subjects and events and exhibit the testimony of over a hundred witnesses of various sorts, from William Byrd and Thomas Jefferson down to the recent, probing journalism of Hodding Carter, the complex literary expressions of Allen Tate and the even more recent findings of oil geologists.

Despite the great disparity of materials and a considerable temporal range, this anthology possesses, for the most part, a very rare kind of formal unity. Although Mr. Thorp has grouped his selections under such various topical headings as "The Land," "Sports and Pastimes," "Violence," "Military Glory," and "The Arts" (among which he wisely includes cooking as well as story-telling), the best of the writing he includes has in common one important characteristic: an almost pictorial immediacy. It hardly matters about the time, the place or the subject if the pages can be made to jump to the eye, so to speak. Most often they do. The expression may not be literally pictorial, but we are generally made conscious of a living witness caught in a concrete moment of history.

One of these moments occurred February 23, 1862, when a lady diarist standing in Richmond's Capitol Square watched Jefferson Davis take the oath of office as President of the Confederacy. Above him with sword drawn is the figure of George Washington, who had taken the same oath some seventy years before. At either side were ranged the figures of Jefferson and Patrick Henry. Another such moment is General Grant's simple and honest account of Lee's surrender at Appomattox, a part of the *Memoirs* doggedly written as Grant lay slowly dying of cancer.

Even more singular in some ways are the brief off-beat moments redeemed from time, as when another lady diarist tries to fathom the emotions of her slaves as freedom draws near and comments, "They go about in their black masks, not a ripple of emotion showing." There is both irony and pathos in the reporting of an English journalist who is trying to make some sense and order out of the revelry and confusion which accompanied the siege of Fort Sumter in April of 1861. His account has more the ring of a lynching story than a military engagement.

Placed alongside writing like this, certain other selections are curiously disappointing. More conventionally historical documents—passages from Jefferson, Jackson's Bank Veto or Clay's speech on the "American System"—do not come to life in the same way. The rhetoric is formal and the voice seems remote.

No section has more historical interest than the one he has called "The Image in the Mirror," which attempts through the use of all sorts of writing to show the image which Southerners held of themselves. Only a small part of the writing included is narrative or descriptive, but the whole section is *visualized*, as the chapter title suggests. Again and again Mr. Thorp lets his Southern witnesses crack the mirror of their own pretensions by saying things that undercut their assumptions—and ours. Who would expect aristocratic and impetuous John Randolph to write to his foster son: "Remember that *labor is necessary to excellence*;" or to warn him "against any indulgence of sudden suggestions of your feelings?" Who would expect this Virginian par excellence, the very father of faction, to warn the same young man not to associate with Virginians in Philadelphia because of their ignorance and because "they foster their ridiculous prejudices against the people of the middle and northern states, of whom, in fact, they know nothing?"

This book seems to suggest that we in the North are in much the same predicament as the near-sighted Virginians whom Randolph scorned. It may turn out that in other respects, too, we are not as different from our southern compatriots as we all along supposed.

Coming

The Bertrand Russell and Nathan Glazer essays originally scheduled for this issue will be published in November. The next few issues of *NR* will also feature Adlai Stevenson's review of Chester Bowles' new book on foreign policy and William S. White's evaluation of the memoirs of Harry S. Truman.

Academic Freedom in Our Time

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A Person of Power

WITH the question of the leadership of our political parties a perennial topic of discussion, *British Political Parties* is a useful book of reference. It comes to us heralded by enthusiastic reviews in the British press, which has hailed it as the most important study of its subject in a half-century.

Its author, R. T. McKenzie, is a Canadian who has lived in London since the war, broadcasting and lecturing at the London School of Economics. He is therefore both intimately acquainted with the British political scene and capable of viewing it with some detachment.

British Political Parties, R. T. McKenzie (St. Martin's Press, $7.50).

The Conservative view of the role of the Leader has not wavered in a century. "The party of gentlemen" has never been ungentlemanly enough to indulge in an open contest for the post of Leader; he emerges from circumstances or from private negotiation, and the unanimous vote which follows is an empty formality. Once chosen, he is, whether as Prime Minister or a Leader of the Opposition, the fountainhead of all Party power. There is an annual Conservative Party Conference and there are regular meetings of the Conservative Members of Parliament, but he neither attends them nor is bound by the results of their deliberations. His authority as Prime Minister to choose the members of his Cabinet has never been challenged.

As McKenzie points out, basic to the Conservative theory is the fact that the Leader is, if not Prime Minister, a potential Prime Minister. Britain's policies in a complex world cannot, as they see it, be determined by an annual convention or back-bench M.P.s not in daily touch with the full facts. The power to govern, they hold, must be centralized in one man who, of course, is in constant consultation with his equally well-informed senior colleagues.

McKenzie details, with touches of wry humor, the manner in which the Labour Party, while continuing to reproach the Conservatives for their "undemocratic" practices, has in fact adopted many of them. Beginning with the idea that Labour's representatives in Parliament were the servants of the mass movement outside, it has steadily yielded to the hard requirements of effective government. Ramsay MacDonald's establishment of the authority of a Labour Prime Minister was welcomed by the more perceptive Tories as recognition of the rightness of their practices. Reeling under the shock of MacDonald's 1931 betrayal, a Labour Party conference resolved that any future Labour Prime Minister should consult with a special committee in choosing his Cabinet members. But, when he became Prime Minister, Clement Attlee "tacitly" (to quote the word he uses in his autobiography) ignored this resolution, and chose his Cabinet just as a Conservative Prime Minister always has.

The authority of the Leader of the Labour Party in opposition is still in process of evolution. The complexities of his position are thoroughly explored by Mr. McKenzie, who concludes with the speculation that both Party machines, their main function having been to reach the millions of voters, will decline in importance as radio and television give politicians the means to speak directly to the electorate. DAVID C. WILLIAMS

The Truman Doctrine

ON THE afternoon of March 12, 1947, an earnest young man of 38 came down the steps of the US Capitol and said to a friend, "It is a tingling experience when the President of the United States addresses a Joint Session of Congress and the words he speaks are yours." Harry Truman had just enunciated the Truman Doctrine and recommended a program of aid to Greece and Turkey, an address which marked the advent of American foreign policy into the Cold War. The young man was Joseph M. Jones, the top State Department speech writer of the day.

The Fifteen Weeks, by Joseph M. Jones (Viking; $3.75).

If ghost writing is a term properly applied to the collaboration of a writer with a panel of government policy officers, Jones was the ghost of the Truman Doctrine, for the stirring phrases were his. Three months later the same man had much to do with a speech at

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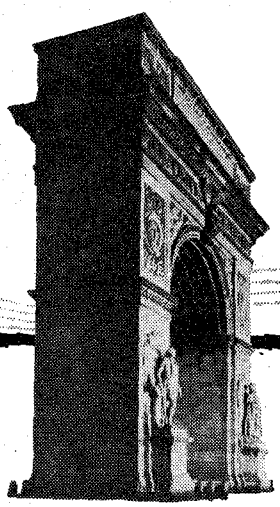

fall and winter 1955

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Harvard University by Secretary of State George C. Marshall, which outlined to the world the Marshall Plan. These two speeches became landmarks in the historic assumption of world leadership by the US in 1947. They stand in American history along side such earlier foreign policy statements as Roosevelt's "quarantine" address of 1937, President Monroe's enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, and Washington's Farewell Address in 1797.

Mr. Jones, now a Yale Fellow, has written a skillful inside story of these 1947 events. The writer lightens his account with anecdotes on American leaders. How, for example, General Eisenhower whispered to Dean Acheson at a White House Conference that Harry Truman might not fully comprehend the significance of the decisions on Greece and Turkey, whereupon Mr. Truman pulled from his desk drawer a well-worn map of the Middle East and delivered a masterful 10-minute lecture on the historic and strategic significance of the Eastern Mediterranean. Concluding, Truman asked Eisenhower good-naturedly if he were satisfied. The General joined in the laughter.

The Fifteen Weeks is written too soon after the events to be considered definitive history, but it is likely to be the best account there is for years to come.

HALDORE HANSON

Notes on Contributors

MARK SCHORER is the author of several books of fiction and criticism. WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS is a practicing physician and, since 1913, a controversial poet. His newest book is *Journey to Love*. IVOR BROWN is a British novelist, dramatist and critic. LEO MARX is on the faculty of American Studies at the University of Minnesota. IRVING HOWE is preparing a new volume of criticism. DANIEL M. FRIEDENBERG is a New York businessman and writer on world affairs. DACHINE RAINER is a free-lance writer. WILLIAM R. TAYLOR is a young Harvard historian. DONALD HALL will publish his first book of poems next month. SHERMAN CONRAD is a young American poet. DAVID C. WILLIAMS is the educational director of ADA. HALDORE HANSON writes regularly for *NR*. HELEN MCCLOY has written several suspense novels. ROBERT W. FRASE is on the staff of the American Book Publishers Council.

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Whodunits — Still a Stepchild

by Helen McCloy

TWO TRENDS are discernible in the mysteries of 1955. First is the increasing internationalism that appears in scenes, in characters and even in authors. We have a Frenchman writing brilliantly of the American scene and American characters—Georges Simenon in *The Hitchhiker*. We have two remarkable American stories that portray the French scene and French characters so deftly they will make former expatriates nostalgic—Aaron Marc Stein in *Moonmilk and Murder* and Frederic Freyer in *The Black, Black Hearse*. We have Englishmen writing effectively of California, New York and Holland—Philip MacDonald in *Guest In The House*, Patrick Quentin in *The Man With Two Wives* and Winston Graham in *The Little Walls*. We have an American dealing most memorably with an Italian scene and Italian characters, Patricia Highsmith in *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, to be published in November, and we have our first Swiss mystery, which is also, apparently, the first mystery to be translated here from the German—*The Judge and His Hangman* by Friedrich Durrenmatt.

The second trend is the blurring of all distinctions between detective stories, mystery stories and suspense novels, and, what is more important, a blurring of the distinction between the suspense novel and the so-called straight novel. As one publisher puts it, fiction has long suffered from "hardening of the categories," those arbitrary classifications originally created for the convenience of booksalesmen.

At present, as far as literary quality goes, the best of the suspense novels are on the same plane as the best of the straight novels. The difference between them has become largely a matter of price. Even there we find confusion. *The Little Walls* is sold at $3.75. *The Talented Mr. Ripley* will be sold at $2.75 though, of the two, *Mr. Ripley* is far closer to the straight novel.

There is also a difference in promotion. An ambitious straight novel is "brought out" like an important débutante, with a fanfare of publicity, while the suspense novel, whatever its literary qualities, is "dropped out" with a minimum of advertising and is lucky if it sells six thousand copies. The straight novel is reviewed by a critic, who can often command a page in the *New York Times* book review section, while a suspense novel is mentioned by a book reviewer, who deals with half a dozen other books in the same column and judges all of them largely by the logic of their plots, treating the well-plotted story, told in deplorably pedestrian styles, and peopled with types instead of characters, on exactly the same plane as the well-plotted story, told with literary art, by a mind capable of reflection as well as observation. Josephine Tey was widely recognized as one of the second sort, yet, in reviews, her work was taken no more seriously than Agatha Christie's, and not half as seriously as the blowzy, historical novels that lend such an air of raffish disorder to the current literary scene.

It will be interesting to see if the new trend shown in the best of the 1955 mysteries will be strong enough to break down the rigid caste system of the book trade in the next few years.

OUTSTANDING RECENT MYSTERIES

Guest In The House, by Philip MacDonald (Crime Club—Doubleday). Wit and charm.

Murder In Trinidad, by John Vandercook (Macmillan-Murder Revisited), (i.e., a reprint in hard covers). Sinister West Indian history and landscape woven into plot adroitly.

The Wench Is Dead, by Fredric Brown (Dutton). A superb suspense story that is also a sensitive study in the contagion of decadence.

The Tooth and The Nail, by William Ballinger (Harper). A masterly *tour de force*, two stories told in alternating chapters, and finally woven into one.

The Black, Black Hearse, by Frederic Freyer (St. Martin's). A nice touch of the macabre. Admirable treatment of French scene.

Moonmilk and Murder, by Aaron Marc Stein (Crime Club-Doubleday). French setting, plus interesting archaeological lore and fascinating characters.

The Hitchhiker, by Georges Simenon (Doubleday) Published in a volume with one other story, the whole book called *Destinations*. Great impact.

The Cellar At Number Five by Shelley Smith (Harper). Subtle characterization. Most believable murder in recent fiction.

Gideon's Day, by J. J. Marric (Harper). Intelligent realism with just enough puzzle interest to create suspense.

The Country-House Burglar, by Michael Gilbert (Harper). Pleasant characters, well-realized; ingenious method of killing, knowledgable treatment of English law and police procedure.

The Little Walls, by Winston Graham (Doubleday). Vivid suspense story, told with taste and skill.

All Through The Night, by Whit Masterson (Dodd, Mead). A California police department trying to outwit a psychotic criminal before he kills. High tension.

The Man With Two Wives, by Patrick Quentin (Simon and Schuster). So much like a well-written novel of manners that the detective story twist at the end seems more contrived than it really is.

Stranger In Town, by Brett Halliday. (Torquil-Dodd, Mead). Described by James Sandoe in *New York Herald Tribune* as. "Mr. Halliday's twenty-seventh chronicle of Michael Shayne and certainly one of the best . . . a remarkably teasing puzzle."

Crime For Two, An anthology of short mysteries written by members of Mystery Writers of America, edited by Frances and Richard Lockridge (Lippincott). Various and stimulating.

A Dying Fall, by Henry Wade (Macmillan). A tale told in a low-pitched, but compelling voice. Must be read to the last line to be appreciated fully. This is English "toughness"—far below the surface.

The Talented Mr. Ripley, by Patricia Highsmith (Coward-McCann). To be published November 30. A dazzling suspense novel that is also an incisive study of an unconscious homosexual. Italian scene as filled with color and delightful detail as the luminous, little landscapes in the background of early Florentine portraits. This candidate for best suspense novel of the year should have a title more suggestive of its quality.

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Books and the Mass Media

by Robert W. Frase

"ARE people reading and buying more or fewer books?" This is by all odds the most frequent question put to publishers and others connected with the book trades. Probably the second most frequent question is, "Why are book prices so high?"

If we want to answer these questions, we have to consider not only book sales and prices, but the trend of consumption and prices of *other* goods and services—especially the so-called mass media: newspapers, magazines, motion pictures, radio and TV. To present such a comparative picture statistically has until quite recently been virtually impossible because the available information in the whole area of the "communications industries" has been such a jumble. However, it is now possible to chart the broad outlines of developments over the past 25 years with some confidence, even while recognizing that there may be a considerable margin of error in individual figures. The diagram that emerges is that the substantial growth of *book consumption has lagged behind the rise in the consumption of the mass media;* and that *book prices are now relatively lower than at an earlier period.* In other words, the shift in consumer demand away from books represents a genuine change in consumer taste and cannot be attributed to a shift in relative prices.

To start with the growth of book sales, there are three significant measuring rods: the number of titles published annually, the number of copies sold and the dollar volume of sales. Title production has not increased much in the 25-year period. (See chart 1.)

Equally important and much more difficult to pin down are figures on the number of copies of books sold. Certain periodic Census reports contain the only comprehensive figures and there hasn't been such a Census since 1947 (figures for 1954 will become available next year). In addition, the book categories used by the Census were changed in 1947, and earlier figures are very difficult to compare. However, by using and interpreting the Census and filling in with some estimates based on trade association surveys for later years, we get the picture which appears in chart 2. It should be noted that this table is confined to general books of fiction and nonfiction, including juveniles, and excludes large and important categories of specialized books such as Bibles, textbooks, encyclopedias, and scientific technical and professional books. Since it is the general book which competes with the mass media and about which the question of book consumption is generally asked, it would have been desirable throughout to confine discussion to this type; unfortunately, the statistics available do not permit this.

This amount of growth, while modest for a 25-year period, doesn't look too bad when considered by itself, but in order to get a true perspective we must look at what has happened to consumption of other and competing sources of information, ideas, recreation and entertainment. To get a satisfactory basis of comparison in this area, it is necessary to shift to another type of statistic—estimates by the US Department of Commerce of personal consumption expenditures which are part of an overall effort to account for the entire flow of money in the economy. The book figure in chart 3 is an estimate of all books sold to the *consumer* (excluding sales abroad and to Government agencies such as public libraries and school systems) and thus includes not only general books but also specialized types such as encyclopedias, Bibles, technical books and others. All the estimates in this table may contain considerable errors in detail, but undoubtedly reflect the correct general magnitudes and trends of growth or decline.

The comparative figures in chart 3 indicate that although personal expenditures for books are about two-thirds greater in dollar terms than they were in 1929, the rate of growth has been less than for competing means of communication. In absolute terms, personal expenditures for books are now apparently somewhat less than expenditures for the repair of radio and TV sets, and only about nine percent as great as the combined total personal expenditures for radio and TV sets, including repair, motion picture admissions and magazine and newspaper purchases. Expenditures for motion pictures have declined substantially since 1947. Book expenditures also appear to have declined slightly since 1947, which I personally believe is not actually the case, but is attributable to lack of sufficient data for estimating the modest increase which has taken place during this period.

In large part the trends shown in this table reflect real changes in public taste and inclination. This conclusion is supported by the data on public library circulation of books, which show an increase in about the same proportion as book sales from 1929 to 1954. There are, however, other factors involved. Motion pictures and books (except paperbounds) are not so easily and universally accessible as newspapers, magazines, radio and TV. There is also the important economic fact that for maga-

2. Estimated sales of general books, 1929-1954

Millions of Copies

	1929	1939	1947	1954	% increase 1929-1954
Adult general books including book club distribution	73	48	110	115	57
Inexpensive paperbound books for adults	—	—	92	190	—
Juveniles (including many at 25c & 50c)	37	35	54	95	157

1. Titles published annually, 1929-1954

	1929	1939	1947	1954	% increase 1929-1954
Original editions	8,340	9,015	7,243	9,690	16.2
New editions and reprints	1,847	1,625	1,939	2,211	19.7
TOTAL	10,187	10,640	9,182	11,901	16.8

Source: *Publishers Weekly*, annual statistical issues in January.

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3. Estimated personal consumption expenditures for selected types of "recreation," 1929-1954

Millions of Dollars

	1929	1939	1947	1954	% change 1929-1954
Magazines, newspapers and sheet music *	$538	$554	$1,234	$1,690	+214
Radio & television receivers, records & musical instruments *	1,012	420	1,429	2,204	+118
Radio & television repairs	26	28	140	600	+2,208
Motion picture admissions	720	659	1,594	1,275	+77
Total of above	$2,296	$1,661	$4,406	$5,769	+151
Books and maps *	$309	$226	$536	$518	+68
% books & maps to total of other four items	13.5	13.6	12.2	9.0	

* The expenditures for sheet music, musical instruments and maps are a very minor factor in the totals for the categories in which they appear.

Source: U. S. Dept. of Commerce, *National Income Supplement*, 1954 edition, and *Survey of Current Business*, July 1955.

zines, newspapers, radio and TV, the consumer pays only a portion of the cost of the article or service purchased, with advertising paying the balance. In 1953 for newspapers and magazines 68 percent of the combined revenues came from advertising and only 32 percent from subscription or newsstand sales, about the same ratio, incidentally, which obtained in 1929. In the case of radio and TV the consumer now pays for his set and for repairs about three-fifths of the combined annual cost of receiving the end product, while the remaining two-fifths of the cost is carried by the advertising revenue which totally supports broadcasting.

It is not yet possible to carry even the most rudimentary statistics on book prices back as far as 1929 on a uniform basis. However, there is a fairly representative index of general book prices for three major categories of hardbound novel, biography and history which runs back as far as 1941. The 1941 and 1954 figures are listed in chart 4.

The increase over this 14-year period has thus been on the average about 37 percent. This compares with some other indexes of consumer prices and with the growth in per capita income after taxes during the same period, as presented in chart 5.

In other words, retail prices of hardbound novels, biography and history, have gone up about half as much as the cost of living as a whole and considerably less than half as much as retail prices in such categories as food, clothing and furniture. In addition, two entirely new categories of paperbound, largely reprint, books have come into existence in the past 15 years, the 25-50 cent variety, largely sold on newsstands, which had just started in 1941 and which now sells in the hundreds of millions of copies, and the more recent 75c-$1.50 variety sold in bookstores, starting in 1953. Thus the average retail price of general books purchased by the consumer has probably not increased even as much as the amount shown here.

In terms of economic theory, this relative cheapening of the price of books compared to most other goods and services, combined with a doubling and more of per capita spendable income, should have resulted in a much greater increase in book sales than has occurred, provided (1) that the relative attractiveness of books as a consumption item remained constant, and (2) that the incomes of book buyers increased as much as average per capita income. Actually neither of these two conditions has been met.

There has been an important shift of relative consumer demand away from books for a variety of sociological reasons which are too complex to be discussed here. It is probably also true that the second factor has had some influence—that the income of book buyers has not increased as much in the past quarter century as average per capita income. This is a subject about which we have no useable statistical information—but a number of examples come to mind, such as the relative decline in the income of one important class of book buyers — college and university faculty members — as compared with the national average per capita income.

5. Price and income changes, 1941-1954

	PRICE INDEX 1941	1954	% increase 1941-1954
Selected books from table above	100	137	+37
Cost of living	62.9	114.8	+82
Apparel	55.6	104.3	+88
Food	52.2	112.6	+116
Rent	88.4	128.5	+45
House furnishings	55.6	106.1	+91
Per capita disposable income (after taxes)	$682	$1,560	+129

Source: *Statistical Abstract of the U. S.*, 1955 edition.

4. Average retail prices of hard cover original editions 1941-1954

	1941	1954	% increase 1941-1954
Novels	$2.58	$3.50	37
Biography	$3.30	$4.40	33
History	$3.89	$5.56	43

Source: *Publishers Weekly*, Vol. 166, No. 24, December 11, 1954, p. 2271; based on a tabulation of list prices of a representative sample in publishing seasons.

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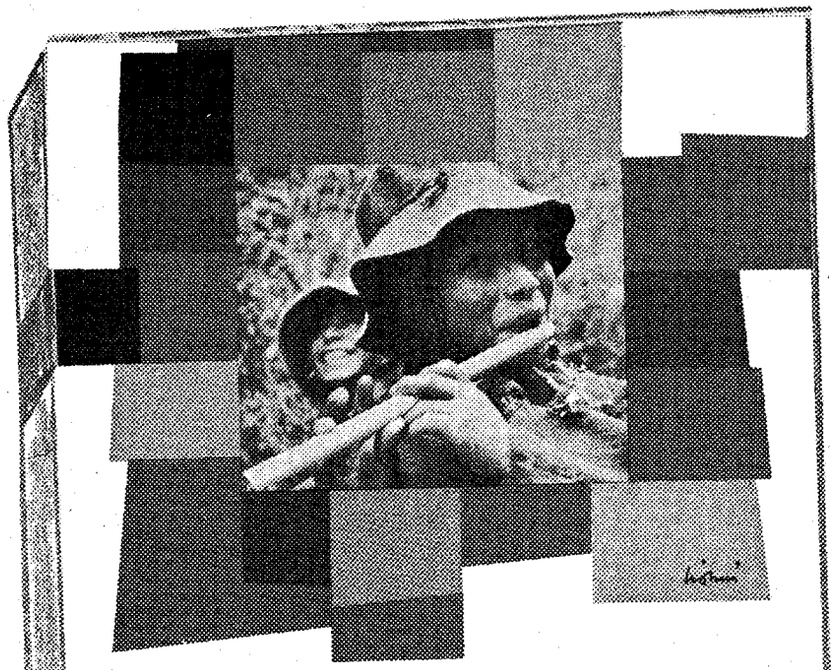

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